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THE LOVE THAT LIFTS

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THE LOVE THAT LIFTS

BY

HENRY HOWARD

AUTHOR OF 'THE RAIMENT OF THE SOUL,' 'THE SUMMITS
OF THE SOUL,' 'THE CONNING-TOWER OF THE SOUL,'
'A PRINCE IN THE MAKING,' ETC., ETC.

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THESE TO HER MEMORY,
WHOSE LOVING COMRADESHIP
MADE POSSIBLE, UNDER GOD,
ALL THAT WAS BEST IN HER
HUSBAND'S LIFE AND WORK

The writer desires to express his warmest thanks to his friend, Dr. A. S. Way, who has laid him under deep obligation by his kindness in reading the MS., correcting the proofs, and superintending the publication of this volume.

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I

THE LOVE THAT LIFTS

Thou hast loved my soul from the pit.—ISA. xxxviii. 17 R.V.
(Marginal reading)

WE require to come up to the study of this song through the history and experience of the man from whose soul it broke. Even among the best of the Hebrew kings, Hezekiah was in many respects one of the most noteworthy of Judah's lofty line.

His father Ahaz was a strange mixture of superstition and irreverence, of weakness and obstinacy, of gravity and levity. When the most serious matters of State were trembling in the balance, and the crisis required him to visit Tiglath-Pileser at Damascus, with whom, contrary to Isaiah's advice, he had formed an alliance, so lightly did the concerns of the kingdom press upon his mind that his main anxiety seems to have been to secure a replica of some strange altar which had struck his fancy in the capital of the heathen king. It must have created a curious impression on the idolatrous Assyrians to find this royal worshipper of Jehovah so enamoured of their altar as to send the plans and specifications to Urijah, the priest at Jerusalem, with instructions to build one after the same pattern.

During this visit he also seems to have seen a Babylonish sun-dial, which he likewise had reproduced in Jerusalem. Its principle of construction appears to have been a circular system of steps arranged around a central pillar or obelisk, whose shadow, as it shortened up to the noon on the western side, and lengthened down from noon on the eastern side, would serve by the number of steps it had travelled to indicate the time of day. That this kind of thing appealed so strongly to Ahaz suggests the possession of a scientific taste and tendency; though possibly the fact that among these northern nations the knowledge of astronomy was coupled with the belief in the influence of the heavenly bodies on human destiny may have stimulated his desire to make it his study. But whether to be regarded as a sign of his folly or wisdom, the dial of Ahaz has found its way into Hebrew history, and certainly did serve, in the case of Hezekiah his son, to cast the horoscope of his life. Such then was the father of Hezekiah, a man who was such a lover of peace and quietness at any price that he was prepared to sacrifice national independence in order to gain it, making affinity with Babylon, which could mean nothing else but subjugation to a foreign yoke, with all the burden of taxation it involved.

Nor was this the least peril to which it laid them open. There was the moral contagion of an idolatrous cult that called for human sacrifices in expiation of human guilt. To this Ahaz fell a victim, so that his first-born had been passed through the fire as an offering

to Moloch. Thus both his natural instincts as a father and his religious instincts as a Hebrew had been corrupted through his alliance with the Assyrian court.

Had Hezekiah been left exclusively to such baneful influence as this, then the doom of destruction and captivity, which was delayed for more than a century, must have fallen in his day. But, as so often happens, the defects in the character of the father would seem to have been more than counterbalanced by the magnificent qualities of the mother.

Abigail was the carefully-trained and spiritually-minded daughter of Zechariah the prophet. How Ahaz ever succeeded in winning the hand and heart of so finely-grained a woman is one of those inscrutable mysteries which every age repeats, but which no age seems able to solve ; but it is at least one of the ways by which the moral balance of the race is maintained.

It is clear, however, that his mother's influence was the dominating force in Hezekiah's life. What it meant for him, and through him for the nation, to be thus girded and guided by such a mother's hand, it is impossible to estimate. Added to this must be reckoned the influence of his grandfather Zechariah, an ever-present and potent force for righteousness, in the atmosphere of which he probably passed many of his earlier years. Later he came under the spell of Isaiah, that still mightier moral force, who has been described as 'a prince among a generation of princes, a Titan among a tribe of Titans, and of all the prophets that

rose on aspiring pinion to greet the Sun of Righteousness it was his, the evangelical eagle, to mount the highest and catch upon his wings the richest anticipation of His rising.'

Now this was the kind of man that the young king, wisely made his counsellor and confidant, so that Isaiah stood to him as a sort of court-chaplain as well as court-physician during this eventful reign. The prophets of Israel and Judah were the medical men of their age. They made the cause and cure of disease their careful study, and were constantly resorted to in times of sickness, not necessarily because they were supposed to possess miraculous powers, but because by natural means, such as herbal treatment and thermal baths, they were so successful in healing the ailments of their time. Thus it was that in his two-fold capacity of prophet and physician, it devolved upon Isaiah to perform the mournful task, always difficult and delicate for the minister or the medical man, and now rendered doubly so by the royal prestige of his patient, of breaking the news as to the hopelessness of his case.

Hezekiah had come of a short-lived family. His father had reigned sixteen years, and had died at thirty-six; his grandfather had also reigned but sixteen years, and had died at forty-one. And now he himself had but entered the fifteenth year of his reign, and was receiving his death-warrant at the age of forty. No one can fully appreciate what it must mean to a man to be thus smitten in his prime but those who have

been called in like manner to enter the shadow of eclipse while their sun was yet at its noon.]

Here was a man of affairs, a man who took his kingly office seriously, who combined the gift of initiative with that of great executive force. He had come to the throne in evil times after an evil reign. His father had left him a legacy of constitutional mismanagement; a kingdom entailed, and discredited by all sorts of debts and disabilities. He had taken up the task of moral and material reform with a resolute will, first of all restoring the Temple service and re-establishing the priestly order, thus recalling the nation to its early ideals. Then he introduced a policy of successful resistance against the Assyrian imposts which his father had incurred, with the result that the affairs of State were placed on a sound financial basis. He also carried out a scheme providing for a pure and plentiful water supply for the city; and for such a man, at the zenith of his might, and in the midst of his years and usefulness, to be told to put his house in order because he must die, was enough to blanch the cheek of a braver man than Hezekiah, and make a question spring unbidden to the lips.]

When old men die, having served their generation, the element of grief is reduced to a minimum. There is a grateful sense of realized ideals and completed tasks, and their removal is like the garnering of richly-ripened grain. But when the young or middle-aged die we feel that there has been treachery somewhere, and that we have been betrayed. The lie has

been given to hope, and there is something within us that clamours for redress. In ordinary life it is the prospect of achievement that invites initiative and prompts the formation of plans. In other words, hope is the dynamic that drives all the wheels of life, and Hezekiah's hope was killed. The first part of this psalm is set in the minor key; but the verse of the text marks where it breaks into the major. Grade by descending grade it passes into deeper depths of gloom, even as its writer passed downward towards the grave. It is the shuddering memory of that descent towards Sheol that quivers through every verse with mortal pain.

Let no man say Hezekiah was a coward for weeping sore, and turning his face to the wall. Bring it home to yourselves; let this thing happen during the coming week to one of you. The development of some sinister symptom, the calling in of the family doctor, the examination, the concerned look, your anxious question, the evasive reply, the suggested seeking of another opinion, the arrival of the specialist, the second examination, the retirement for consultation, the awful suspense, the return of your own doctor alone, the grave demeanour that answers your question before it is put, and sends the blood with a cold rush to the heart, then finally the quiet voice as he sits beside your bed bidding you put your affairs in order and play the man, because you have gone to your office for the last time. The man who could receive that message unmoved would have to be more

than human—or less! Hezekiah was neither, and the beauty of these Bible sketches is that they are so intensely human. Indeed, it is the *vox humana* note which makes them so dear to our hearts, for it reveals them as men of like passions with ourselves.

Here, then, was this King of Judah suddenly arrested in the midst of his great reforms and flung upon a bed of pain. He saw all that life held of joy and usefulness slipping from his grasp. In one swift moment his plans were shattered to fragments and scattered in dust.

Fully to appreciate the power of this poem, I think we must suppose the stricken king to be lying in sight of the ^{seen} step-dial, to which we have referred. As he faced the setting sun, he would see the shadow of the obelisk creeping toward him step by step, the portent of his on-coming doom. Though he might avert his gaze, yet by a fatal fascination would it return, till his spirit failed within him at the sight of the uncanny thing coming on with stealthy slide. Only those who have known the bitterness of death can measure the intensity of suffering through which Hezekiah must have passed before he received the assurance that his prayer had been answered and his respite decreed. With what joy must the prophet have sped with the reversal of his royal patient's doom; and as together they watch the descending shadow, now no longer a menace, but robbed of all its dread, ~~let~~ it turns, and though the sun is still westering, and by rights the shadow should continue to stretch itself

out and down, yet by some refraction of light it ascends ten steps, and becomes a sign to Hezekiah that the word of Isaiah is the word of the Lord, turning his sighing into singing, and his night into day.]

It is at this point that our text takes on. But we shall sadly misread it if we interpret it as merely setting forth a deliverance from physical death. Hezekiah had been sounding depths not only of physical pain and peril, but of moral distress and spiritual despair. Nothing could be more poignant than the sin-consciousness of these ancient Hebrews, and the nobler the nature the more acute the consciousness became. Hezekiah, as we have pointed out, was one of the best of the Hebrew kings; but it was as though the sins of the nation re-acted on the monarch, so as to produce in him, as its constitutional leader and head, the consciousness of accumulated guilt and shame.

Vicarious suffering is inseparable from the fact of solidarity, and Hezekiah in a sense bore the guilt and carried the sorrows of the nation's disloyalty and defection. This does not mean that his sufferings were in any sense a substitute for theirs; but that being their king he became the focal point where their wrong-doings came to the most burning consciousness of shame and blame. That he was an extremely sensitive soul, capable of great exaltation or depression, and keenly responsive to pleasure or pain, is clear from the recorded incidents of his life, as well as from the cadence of this wonderful song.

[The structure of this poem is clearly designed to

represent in literary form, first of all, the gradual descent of the shadow, stretching itself out and down through the ten grades of the step-dial 'portending the on-coming doom of the King, and then its swift *retreat* ~~return as it shortened itself up and doubled back~~ through ten steps to the starting-point, thus symbolizing the reversal of the death-sentence under which he lay. This means, then, that we have enshrined here a most exquisite piece of Hebrew literary art. Nothing could exceed the beauty and symmetry of this song. No one with the slightest approach to literary appreciation can read it without falling under its spell. Every line quivers with emotion and throbs with the intensity of the writer's soul. Poetry has been defined as 'an exquisite expression of an exquisite impression.' In poetry the feelings are taken up into thought, interpreted by reason, and translated into terms of such expressive language as to reproduce in the mind that receives precisely similar feelings to those which are experienced in the mind that expounds. A poem is powerful in the proportion that it succeeds in achieving this result—always, of course, assuming the requisite sensitiveness to impression of the reader's soul. For it matters not how charged the poet's lines may be with force and fire, nor how stately may be the music of their march, if the man who reads them have no music in his soul. Shakespeare and Milton, Dante and Schiller, Browning and Tennyson are all locked up in dullness to the dull. But to the quickened sense, to the finely attuned soul, the outbreathing of

the poet's spirit is as the whispering night-wind when it wakes the mountain-pines to music, or sets the grasses trembling with delight as they swing and sing to the rhythmic beat of its mystic wand.

What we shall get out of this or any other poem will depend on what we bring to it in the way of mental and moral sympathy and receptivity. Feeling as well as thought, heart as well as brain, must come to the interpretation of our text, because here are heights to which mere reason cannot soar, depths which her plummet cannot sound. It is the heart that is speaking to us here, and it has a language and a logic all its own. The greatest and grandest verities of life do not reach us by way of the intellect. Thus it comes to pass that to the cultured heart, to the sensitized soul, to the finely disciplined affections, are granted revelations that are withheld from the wisest and brightest intellects of the race. When Christ said: 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,' He must not be regarded as rejoicing that the ancient sages of Egypt and Babylon, of Greece, and Rome had pursued their long and weary search for truth in vain. His rejoicing sprang from the fact that it was not necessary to pass through so severe a curriculum in order to arrive at the truth that we are God's children; but that the loving Father waits to reveal Himself without reserve to the lowly in mind and the childlike in heart.

To induce this spirit is the moral purpose of all life's discipline in the school of pain and loss. In prosperous times we surrender to the magic of the passing show, and come under bondage to the things we touch and see. The 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' have their own way with us and find us all-too-willing thralls. We yield to the witchery of the senses so that the soul is charmed into an enchanted sleep. Conscience, the moral sentry, is drugged into insensibility; and were it not for the kindly interferences that break in upon our torpor, and loose us from the spell of their enchantment, we should slumber on till sleep had deepened into death. Before love can save, however, it must induce the consciousness of loss. Before it can begin to uplift, it must reduce the soul to a realization of absolute helplessness and despair of self-recovery. It must reveal the rottenness of the earthly props in which we trust for support, in order to throw us back on God. It must smite the scales from our eyes and flash the danger-signal on our track to doom, before it can fetch us up on the downward way. God cannot save a morally hypnotized man. The mesmeric sleep into which sin casts the soul must first of all be broken. The stupefied moral sense must be shaken from its stupor and faced with the issues at stake. The alternatives of good and evil must be clearly apprehended, the free choice of right must be made in the presence of competing wrong, and with calm deliberation, or it can be of no moral worth. Thus whatever

discipline love may inflict must be so measured and administered as to respect the sanctity of the personal will, and preserve it from being unduly pressed or overborne.

Hezekiah, as we have seen, had to pass grade by grade to the very depths of despair before his vision became sufficiently purged to pierce the veils of sense, and gaze with clear and comprehending vision on the world of spirit. Or, to put it in another way, Hezekiah had to be stripped fold by fold of fleshly thought and feeling before the spiritual forces which wrapped him about could find their way into his consciousness, and convince him of their presence and power. The God-consciousness thus awakened in Hezekiah induced of necessity a corresponding sin-consciousness that prostrated him in the Presence of the Infinite Purity, where he waited for the cleansing word that should bid him rise renewed and go in peace. When love had thus succeeded in thrusting him down into the deeps, it found the opportunity for which it sought, of uplifting him to new thoughts of God and things unseen. This is the sacramental meaning and value of all the agony and desolation through which humanity is called to pass. It is not to open up man's way to the heart of God, through any merit that attaches to the endurance of mortal pain. Nay, the way to God's heart is, and always has been open. The work of love was to find a way for God to the heart of man ; to create in man such a sense of orphanage and wretchedness as should make him turn in weariness

and disgust from the far country, and come back to the peace and plenty of the Father's House. The problem set for infinite love to solve was not how to provide salvation, but how to get salvation off its hands ; not how to secure the goods, but to get man to take delivery of them, even without money and without price. If love cannot do this, nothing can. But it can and it will ; for amid the fullness and infinite variety of its manifestations shall heart after heart be won to Christ, till the last wanderer has been safely gathered home. When the world gets to understand the love in Christ, when men begin to see that God's love was so great and His longing for their home-coming so intense that it stopped at nothing in the way of sacrifice in order to bring it about, they have nothing to say. Such an argument is unanswerable, such love is invincible. It carries all before it by the force of its infinite tenderness. It is the consciousness of this love that is going to lift men from the lowest hell of selfishness, degradation, and despair, to all the heights of heavenly purity, and render them worthy to walk with Christ in white. Nothing can come between the human soul and the divine love. That love cannot be cut out of life. It will be in our lives to fill them with unrest till we yield to its persistent power. It will press everything, pain, tears, even death into its service, exhausting every effort to overtake and retrieve. 'For love never faileth.'

Thus, I repeat, there is a deeper meaning in these words of our text than the mere joy of physical

deliverance. Just as the shadow on the dial was merely a symbol of the shadow of death, so this bodily cure is simply a sign and seal of a deeper and more significant spiritual experience that came to the king. It brought into his life a consciousness of the divine pity and uplifting love compared with which an extension of fifteen years more or less of earthly life was not worthy to be named. I do not say that the king had this immediate estimate of it, but it would be a growing conviction with the passing of the years, so that the inevitable end would be not only divested of its dread, but invested with a new and wondrous hope. Death could never again be the same to a man who knew that he had for his friend Death's Master and Lord, who could bid the shadow advance or retreat at His will. The king has thus come back from death with new thoughts of God, new thoughts of men, and new thoughts of destiny. He has seen things in a new light. The divine love is set as a background to all his thinking. Through that love he now construes all that has happened, and in the consciousness of its encompassing arms he is content. He has not come back empty-handed, but laden with mental and moral spoil. Hezekiah's sickness was probably the most morally and mentally fruitful period of his life. It was a deepening process, which in spite of a subsequent and temporary lapse left him permanently enriched.

The great truth which Hezekiah grasped and gathered into this text enfolds the secret of the Cross. Whether he got it entirely through the *via dolorosa*, and as a

pupil in the school of pain, or whether Isaiah helped him to its realization, we cannot say. But he got it, and this is the beginning and end of all revelation, namely, that God is Love. In a more or less dim way this truth is expressed in Prophecy and Psalm ; but for us it gathers up its whole concentrated radiance in the life and character, the death and resurrection of our Incarnate Lord. Let us live our life in the consciousness of that Love, and then the ' Shadow feared of man ' will have no dread for us, because the time, the place, and the manner of our death are all under the sceptre of Him ' who turneth the shadow of death into the morning,' so that sorrow and sighing may flee away.

II

A DISAPPEARING STANDARD

Thou shalt not steal.—EXOD. XX. 15.

THIS is a piece of such elementary morality as—in our presumably advanced stage of ethical culture—it should be superfluous to enforce. A discourse on the eighth commandment might be conceded as being appropriate from a good chaplain in the discharge of his prison duties. A talk on stealing, however, will hardly be considered necessary for the general run of the community, who might reasonably be supposed to be so established in the principles of common honesty as almost to resent any implication to the contrary, which the choice of such a text would seem to involve. Yet there are sinister symptoms of widespread dishonesty in modern commercial and industrial life which, if as general as alleged, must presently threaten the entire social fabric with disruption. All writers on social science are agreed that the prime motive that prompts men to form themselves into social groups is the advantage to be derived from co-operation. But co-operation can be an advantage only as each individual who enjoys the privileges of association fulfils its corresponding obligations. The entire social structure thus rests on the foundation of mutual confidence and trust.

Honesty is fundamental to the stability of a State, so that, apart altogether from any ethical or other-world considerations whatever, and on the purely utilitarian ground of self-preservation, society must be organized in straightforwardness and truth. The more highly organized and complex the social organism becomes, the greater that necessity must be. Even among nations that have encouraged lying and thieving as a policy to be pursued towards outsiders, it has been felt necessary to keep troth between themselves. No State could possibly hold together except there was a clear recognition as to the binding nature of contracts and a mutual reliance on one another's word.

Now at bottom this eighth commandment is the divine sanction for the possession of property. It is the scriptural warrant for ownership, and it affirms the right of the holder against the hand of the spoiler. The wrong of robbery presupposes the right of possession. You cannot steal from any one that which belongs to no one. Thus, in order to make thieving justifiable, we have a school of thinkers who unblushingly affirm that every one has equal rights to everything, which of course worked out logically means that no one has a proper or personal right to anything. But, with the vanishing of rights, responsibilities must also disappear. You cannot dismiss one and retain the other, because rightly understood they are related as convex to concave, and are thus but different sides of the selfsame thing. Granting, then, what is too obvious to dispute, that the awful extremes of idle

wealth and struggling poverty are a grave indictment of our social system, and that the luxury of the few and the misery of the many render this anything but the best of all possible worlds, we must yet be careful lest we treat our grave social disorders with what Huxley calls 'still worse remedies.' Admitting as we must that many of the ills which fill the hearts of social reformers with dismay spring out of the institution of property, we are faced with the problem which is pressing on the minds of the most thoughtful statesmen everywhere, as to whether an institution attended with so many evils can be defended or ought to be retained.

The terrible extremes to which we have referred have given rise to all sorts of suggested remedies. There is the sweeping proposal to obliterate all ownership, and divide the wealth of the world among all men alike. Then when inequalities again arise, as they inevitably must, divide again! This is, of course, an extreme method, but it has its advocates, generally among the young and enthusiastic who, feeling the awful pressure of existing wrongs, but failing to pierce beneath to their underlying causes, hurl themselves against the accidental and local manifestation of the social distemper, while they leave the disease itself untouched. Other and saner suggestions for a more equal distribution of wealth are being made by those who have at heart the well-being of the race. But it is safe to predict that no social redemption is to be found along the line of denying the right of owner-

ship. That right is divinely wrought into the very constitution of things. To argue against the established order is false philosophy, and any philosophy that is not true to the nature of things must break itself to pieces against eternal and inflexible laws. The fact is, when we get the larger synthesis and take in all the facts, we see that the very sins which the possession of property renders possible are simply the shadows of the virtues that the selfsame possession can be made to yield. How a man makes his money, and to what end he works it when it is made, are the surest tests of moral character. Undoubtedly the unregulated desire for acquiring wealth is accountable for the majority of evils to which the institution of property exposes the race. Impatience with the slow but legitimate methods of gaining money or its equivalent, and a desire to reach it at a single stride, lie back of all gambling, and of the thieving that in so many cases is required to keep the gambling up. I do not suppose that I am any exception among city ministers, or that I have a monopoly of the confidence of those who are dishonestly disposed. It follows therefore that, as I am being constantly resorted to by young fellows who have either been detected in fraud, or are trembling on the brink of discovery, it may be safely presumed that the number may be greatly multiplied. Moreover, not a tithe of these defaulters are discovered, or feel their position keenly enough to seek assistance or advice. From all of which the conclusion is forced upon us that this cancerous growth is so widespread

that its roots are ramifying the whole of our commercial life, and turning what was once our glory into shame.

Certain business houses in British centres have deservedly stood high in the scale of commercial honour. To have been trained under their system and direction has been regarded as a guarantee of sterling character and a certificate of good faith. To keep up the credit of these houses has been the pride of former employés. The shock felt by such firms to find all their cherished traditions of rectitude rudely trampled under foot, and their honour smirched, by unworthy members of their staff, is one in which the whole community shares. It undermines the sense of social security. It casts the shade of suspicion on worthy and unworthy alike. It compels employers to resort to methods of safeguarding their property, as hateful to themselves as they are to their men. It destroys that old-time feeling of reciprocal confidence and mutual goodwill which is after all the soul of business, and in its place it creates an atmosphere of suspicion that is fatal to the finest work.

Some months ago, when a series of dishonest practices was reported by one of the principals of a leading city firm, I took occasion to deal with the question of honesty from the pulpit on the following Sunday night. Next morning a letter appeared in a newspaper in which the writer stated: 'I was at the Pirie Street Church on Sunday night and heard Mr. Howard denouncing the dishonesty of certain employés in a

large city warehouse. But Mr. Howard did not state what wages these unfortunate young fellows were receiving. They were probably being "sweated," in which case if an employ   is not receiving wages equal to his worth, he is perfectly justified in levelling up to the value of his services, from his employer's till or stock.'

Now if this principle of subversion be anything like generally accepted in the community, then farewell to all stability; for the entire social structure is doomed and must totter to its fall. This kind of teaching is not merely grossly immoral, it is essentially anti-social; for, by breeding mutual distrust, it must tend to drive men apart. It is a principle of social disintegration, the process of which, unless arrested, must result in resolving society into a multitude of isolated, unrelated, and self-centred units, mutually hostile and each playing for his own hand. This is a swift and sloping path of reversion to that primitive barbarism in which every man lives for himself alone, and regards his fellow-man as existing only that he may be victimized for all that he is worth. Every man who does not 'play the game,' but seeks to profit by his fellow's loss, is a menace to the State. He is a parasite on the body corporate, and society in self-defence is bound to smite him off, or we shall be back in the age of mere low cunning and brute force. Before every dishonest man and woman, lad and girl, I flash this signal of danger. 'Thou shalt not steal' is no dead statute, but a living and

self-administering force. God's laws carry themselves out. The universe is constructed on the principle of a death-trap to the wrong-doer. Its laws can afford to wait, for every avenue of escape is blocked and its victim is doomed. Let us suppose that by villany and cheating you do acquire a competence or even rise to affluence, and build up a fortune so colossal in its proportion as to provoke the envy of mankind—well, what then? The wrongs that you have done will haunt the chamber of your memory, turning your wine to gall and your gains to dust and ashes in your hands. Kipling says, 'The sins that we do by two and two, we must pay for one by one.' You will pay for it here in the loss of moral sensibility, the forfeiture of self-respect, and in momentum on the downward track. Even if through the strange mercy of God you should come at length into the kingdom of His grace, you will pay for it hereafter in lowered status, and consequently lessened power of service, in the world to come.

III

RUNNING TO A FINISH

I count not myself to have apprehended.—PHIL. iii. 13.

To the man who adopts this attitude everything in the way of achievement is possible. It is the forward look with high resolve. It is the will keyed to conquest. Such a mood forecasts the years, overleaps all obstacles, and already holds the future in fee. It has no further use for the past than it has for last year's calendar. It is something to forget, and the sooner the better. Whatever the past has registered, either of failure or success, can be dismissed without loss. Because to dwell on success will breed complacency, and to brood over failure will beget distrust, both of which are sworn foes to the onward march of both mind and morals. Only as the fever of a divine discontent burns in the blood can the soul be got to gird itself for the struggle against inglorious ease, and successfully resist the clamour of desire. Anything is better than for a man to believe that all his achievements are behind him. That means the death of hope. Hope feeds on the future ; it cannot live on the past. The individual or the nation that depends on its history for its inspiration or its vindication already betrays symptoms of decay. Drawing on the past for one's dynamic will result in

Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.

To count oneself to have apprehended or achieved, is at once to relax effort ; and to relax effort is to lose ground. Hence the pressing towards the mark of which the Apostle speaks in the context. Pressure means resistance, and the gradient of the upward way is a perpetual challenge to our powers. Life must be geared for the climb. Acquired momentum, whether in physics or in morals, is soon exhausted, and each individual must make his own running up, or he will soon run down.

Paul had seen many a race lost through over-confidence on the part of the runner, and in this heavenly race he is resolved to relax no effort, but to strain every power to the utmost till his hand shall close on the coveted prize. Not the way that he has come, but the distance he has yet to go, fills his eye, absorbs his thought and summons all his powers.

What a magnificent contrast does this moral athlete present to the easy-going, almost epicurean content of our latter-day Christianity ! This setting forth of the Christian life under cover of a race is full of suggestiveness. It was one of Paul's favourite metaphors. It unfolded and expressed the progressive idea of salvation, which was so dear to his mind. Salvation with this great Apostle was not something which lay behind him finished and achieved, but something in front which had yet to be realized, and calling for perpetual attention and care. The goal and prize,

to which the whole process was seen to move, was likeness to his Lord: 'That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable unto His death.'

While Paul was an idealist, yet no more sternly practical man ever breathed. He knew, as few men get to know, the value of a great and heroic past. But he also knew that the whole of that value would be neutralized unless it was carried forward and made available for present and future use. Anything in a man's past that cannot thus be carried forward with advantage, and be made to serve his interests by making its contribution to the great ends of life, had best be forgotten. Hence he says, 'Forgetting the things that are behind.' Like the rest of us, Paul had a past which was sadly mixed; and he felt that, for the sake of present and all-round efficiency, it was best to turn his back completely upon it and face only the future. The past is out of hand. Regrets cannot alter it. Even to God is this denied to undo that which has been done. 'Let the dead past bury its dead' is sound advice. There is no time for morbid and fruitless regret. That will only diminish a man's force and depress his spirits. The future rests with the hopeful, buoyant, believing soul, that counts difficulties as existing only that they may be surmounted, and invariably feels equal to the task.

As to the past, there are no possibilities. It belongs to the things that have been or might have been.

Possibilities belong to the present or to the future. Paul saw this, and threw himself in all the might of his manhood under the power of that which was to be.

He 'counted.' This is a familiar phrase of Paul's. He figured things out. His conduct was not a flash in the pan, ignited by the impact of some sudden impulse and then dying out in smoke. It was the calmly reasoned conviction of his mind after taking all things into account. Looking at things as they were, and comparing them with what they ought to have been, he concluded that he had not yet achieved, but had still a long way to go. What a rebuke to the self-complacency of those who are sitting down in contented mediocrity, is the mood of this divinely discontented soul! Here was a man of outstanding powers—a university graduate, skilled in logic and rhetoric—one who had wedded in himself the very best of East and West, representing in one personality the mystical Hebrew and the practical Greek. Standing now at the close of a long life, of splendid deeds and words, having permanently enriched the literature of the world by his writings, and the moral history of the world by his example, he nevertheless reckons that he has not yet attained.

Now Paul is always interesting even when most severely logical and impersonal ; but when he becomes autobiographical he is fascinating to a degree. It is always a privileged moment when your great man becomes confidential, and, conducting you behind the

veil which screens him from the vulgar gaze, consents to whisper the secret of his strength. The beauty of Paul's letters lies in these momentary glimpses of his inner life which they afford. He is so thoroughly human that we can feel his heart beat along these lines, and the secret of his tireless energy is that he is not satisfied. He places himself alongside of his readers in this letter. There is no loud boasting; neither is there any proud aloofness, nor pharisaic posing for effect. No claim is here to have out-distanced all competitors, and to have reached the goal of his desire. There is no air of a victor displaying his laurels and talking down in patronizing tones to other and less successful contestants: 'If you will only strive as I have striven, then too, like me, you will attain!' No, he is still in the struggle, amid all the heat and dust and sweat of conflict, with an awful sense of interval between the actual and the ideal, between himself and the goal toward which he speeds. Such a testimony from such a man should serve as a fine corrective to the self-satisfaction which is drugging so many of us into idle and effortless ways. To be satisfied is to cut the nerve of all lofty and sustained endeavour, and to slip back inevitably among the degenerates and inefficient. It is so everywhere—in business, in art, in science, in letters, in religion. The struggle of life is all at the bottom, or, to preserve the metaphor of the text, all the jostling in life's race is at the start. As the mile opens itself out before the runners, competition becomes less keen and crowding,

till near the winning-post there is room enough and to spare.

No business firm, no nation, no church can live on its past. Once we regard ourselves as having achieved, we put ourselves out of the running. We straight-way become a negligible quantity and cease to count. But to hold our own and win through has its price. Here too, Paul is our example. Here again he 'counted,' figuring the cost of Christianity, and what it would mean to break with all the traditions and associations of the past, and he calmly gives us the result. 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that I may win Christ.' Here was no whimpering around the market as of one who has invested in a losing venture; but the rapture of a man who knows he is on the winning side, and that for every pound put in he will take out a hundred in return.

In this race then, staying-power is the supreme requirement. Most of the failures in business and professional careers, as well as in religious life, are due to the absence of this quality. It is of no use to work at some things at all, unless they are worked to a finish. To all-but-win is to lose. The 'all-but' medical man who has failed to take his degree is disqualified from practising, just as rigidly as the most notorious quack. It is nothing that he can show that three-

quarters of his medical course was triumphantly run. It was the success of the last quarter that alone could give permanent value to the first three, and to fail in that is to neutralize all that went before, so far as any legal qualification to practise is concerned. So with the Christian course ; it must be run to a finish. The Apostle Paul determined to forget the things which were behind and to reach forth to those which were before. He had no further use for the past than to forget it.

Regarding the Christian race as the pursuit of the ideal righteousness both for ourselves and others, it must be remembered that, just as the Olympic contests had their rigorous rules, to depart from which was to be disqualified, so is it in the contest for the moral mastery. There are conditions stringently enjoined, for even a right end must not be sought by doubtful or illicit means. The great Apostle, speaking of the Greek games, points out that a man is not crowned unless he contends lawfully, from which it is clear that just as there were those who did not play the game in the contests of the Stadium, and were consequently turned down by the judges, so, according to Paul, there was a possibility in the arena of the moral struggle, of the contestant, through sharp practice, gaining some unfair advantage, and thus of having his claim disallowed. It is difficult, of course, at this distance of time, to ascertain all the rules and regulations which controlled the games of ancient times. But that some of them must have suggested to Paul

certain great analogies which would occur to his readers, is all the clearer from the fact that they are not stated but simply implied. There is a phrase in the letter to the Hebrews, 'the race that is set before us,' which implies that the course is 'laid down,' marked out, that is, as to its direction and its distance, together with all the conditions of preparation and pursuit. Every candidate in the Olympic games was obliged to prove that he had put in ten months' training before his nomination and to put in another month before the event. This corresponds with the 'laying aside of every weight,' which really means to get rid of all superfluous flesh. Then again, we read how runners, with soul triumphant over the body, strained onward, heedless of failing heart and limb—on to the goal; so that a victor was even known to drop dead as he received the crown. This answers to the word 'patience,' or 'staying-power,' as it may be rendered. It is also clear from the accounts that have come down to us, that every candidate was required to run in his own name, or find himself disqualified. Here at least is one point of analogy in the matter of unlawful running which may very well have been present to the Apostle's mind. He that would enter for the Christian race must do so in a perfectly frank and open manner. He must declare himself; for to run this race secretly or anonymously will be to be counted out as unworthy at the finish. But nothing is commoner than to hear men say, 'I trust I lead a Christian life, but I don't make any song about it.—I see

that they

so much profession without the practice that I prefer to practise without making profession.' The fear of hypocrisy in one direction thus drives them to hypocrisy in another ; for the man who is endeavouring to lead a godly life while pretending to be a man of the world, is as truly a hypocrite as the man who is living a worldly life while posing as a man of God. Christ has laid down as an absolute condition of discipleship a perfectly frank avowal on the part of His followers of their having entered the lists in His name. ' He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father in heaven.'

This non-committal policy, whether it springs from weakness or will, infirmity of purpose or fear of criticism, will cut the runner out of the honour list, and rightly so, because by taking such an attitude he escapes some of the most rigid requirements of the contest. He reduces what has been deliberately designed as a strenuous and persistent effort, before countless witnesses, into a private and easy go-as-you-please tournament, that can be taken up or dropped at will. This is to strive unlawfully. Not thus did Paul regard the Christian course. To him it was a lifelong struggle, from which death alone could give honourable release. Having then counted the cost, let us, like him, strip ourselves for the strife, counting no hardness too severe to endure, and no sacrifice too great to make, if we may but win through to the goal, and by running to a finish make sure of the coveted crown.

IV

THE MORAL STADIUM.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.—I COR. ix. 26. 27

IN our last study we saw how fond was the Apostle Paul of taking his illustrations from the racecourse and the prize-ring. The point, however, which is emphasized in our text to-day differs from that with which we have lately dealt. Then it was the course that stretched before the runner, the distance yet to be covered, the goal yet to be reached. To-day it is the training for the contest that occupies his thought. Now this training, as is very well known, was always a serious business with Greek and Roman athletes, and occupied some eight to ten months of the year. The dietary scale was rigid and the self-discipline severe. Everything that science could suggest or ingenuity devise was done to bring the body to perfect fitness and form.

In an ordinary race, as Paul points out in the context, many run, but only one received the prize: so that here at least is one point at which the analogy is not intended to hold, for in the heavenly race the apostle enjoins all to run that all may obtain. The fact is that the whole imagery of the stadium has to be

transferred from without to within. The competition in this race is not between the various runners. Each individual comprises within the compass of his own personality both the arena of conflict and the competing forces that struggle for the mastery. The dual nature in man supplies the conflicting elements which contest for supremacy, and the battle between them is fought on the inner field of thought and shut off from all human gaze. It is a lifelong war, and even the best of men experience alternations of victory and defeat. Now, it may be, the higher nature is dominant, and, like a soaring eagle, becomes unconscious of the body to which it is linked ; then again the flesh becomes victorious, and the white-winged soul, soiled and dishonoured, is dragged downwards to the dust. Thus in most of us forth and back the tide of battle rolls, while the issue hangs uncertain in the balance, till even the best of men are haunted with a dread lest, after all, they may end up in failure and defeat.

Not so with Paul, however. He had passed the stage of alternating victory and defeat, so that with quiet confidence he could say : ' So run I, not as uncertainly : so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.' Uncertainty of action has its breeding-ground in uncertainty of thought.

Doubtfulness in the realm of a man's thinking leads inevitably to hesitancy in the realm of his conduct. Take the matter of racing, for example, which serves Paul for an illustration in this passage. The success of a runner depends absolutely on the unification of all

his forces and their co-ordination to the one business of reaching the goal. But this co-ordination of function finds its unifying medium in the fixed and settled conviction of the runner that he is on the right track, and that every stride he takes is bringing him nearer the coveted prize. Once unsettle that conviction, once project into his mind a doubt as to his direction, and that doubt will immediately communicate itself to his movement and slow his steps. The mental uncertainty will at once manifest itself in uncertainty of physical action and spoil his chance of success.

Compare, for example, the behaviour of a dog when hot on the trail of the game that he is hunting down, with that which he displays when he has lost the scent. In the first case he moves with swiftness and deadly precision, as though the track had been cut for his feet. In the second he slows, hesitates, and halts; now lifting one paw in air and then the other, with his nose sniffing the wind. It is a most unhappy moment for a dog when he has thus 'faulted' the scent. He looks round doubtfully, runs up and down, in and out, now back again on his tracks, then forward and in circles, baffled and perplexed. Whence all this uncertainty of action? Why, clearly because there is uncertainty in perception. The whole of this erratic movement has to be referred to the inward and confused condition of the dog's brain, which, through not being supplied with sufficient information, is unable, or at least unwilling, to urge him forth in

any given direction, for fear of widening instead of lessening the distance between him and the coveted game.

You see, then, with how fine a psychological insight Paul resolves the whole business of the Christian race into a question of thought, purpose, and intent. The field of performance is thus transferred from the outward and visible stadium, ringed round with eager spectators, to that which is inward and invisible, and compassed about with the great cloud of witnesses who have passed within the veil, and who

Watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger, other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

We have said that the training of the Greek and Roman athletes was a serious business ; and Paul is anxious that his converts shall treat the Christian race at least as seriously as the contests of the stadium. It is against the easy, happy-go-lucky mood that we must guard. We recognize that in business we must be in earnest, and that if we would win the thrones and chairs of civil power we must let out all our force and put all our powers on stretch. Even championship in cricket, rowing, tennis, or swimming has its price, which is rigorously demanded and cheerfully paid as the cost of excellence. But when it comes to religion we seem to think that all its concerns can take care of themselves, that we can allow all the mightiest faculties of our souls to lie dormant and untended without sustaining loss, and then, when we wish to

command their service, find them effective and ready to our hand. If we treated our bodies as we do our souls, we should speedily become a negligible quantity and of interest only to the undertaker. In the matter of business, too, in order to fail there is no need whatever to insult our clients or fire our stock. Simply let things slide, and they'll go fast enough to the dogs without any shove from behind.

Here, then, is the point upon which the great apostle desires to fix our attention : that the Christian life is no easy and go-as-you-please tournament. It is a race, it is a fight ; there is ground to be covered, there are enemies to face, which will call for all our forces of mind and soul and body. Self-discipline becomes one of the main factors in securing this success—to have the mind under control, the thoughts in leash, the desires held back, and every purpose pressed into the service of the soul.

Then also in the realm of the bodily appetites we need to rule with a divinely reinforced will ; not maiming and disabling the body so as to unfit it for service, neither so treating it that its aches and pains are such an ever-present consciousness as to distract the mind, but having it in such fine efficiency, under such control, that every ounce of its force is available for service at a moment's call. God has use for every faculty, and desires us to have them all in readiness that He may command them at all times, in all places and to all issues. It is not that they will always be wanted, any more than the fire-brigades are always

required, but they must always be in readiness to spring with alacrity at the call of need.

Here arises the necessity for self-discipline. One cannot have all the powers in beautiful and reciprocal relation unless they are exercised in concert. There is nothing that can unify and utilize all the forces of mind and soul and body like the service of God. Here all our powers find their focal point. Here they are lifted to the highest degree of efficiency, and reach their flower and crown.

We shall see presently, however, that all this fine federation has first of all to be realized in the realm of our thinking before it can translate itself into action in the working days of life.

We have said that the field of performance must be regarded as transferred from the outward and visible stadium to that which is inward and invisible. It is on this inner field of intention that we win or lose our moral battles. Nothing that happens 'outside the ring,' so to speak, is placed to our moral credit or debit. Our true life is being lived in secret, and all withdrawn from public gaze. What is outward is all of no moral concern, excepting as it is an index of what is inward. Only to the extent that the exterior life corresponds with the interior can we be regarded as sincere. The judgement-seat will be set up in the field of our intentions, and by them shall we be justified or condemned, crowned or cast away. The proof that all we have been saying in regard to the Christian race is true is found in the fact that when Paul changes

the metaphor from a race to a fight, he so elaborates it as to leave no room for doubt. 'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway.'

Instead of finding his antagonist without, Paul discovers him within. It is the conflict between the upper and lower natures, each struggling for the mastery; and as long as the issue is uncertain on this inner field, must behaviour be uncertain on the outer field. Here, then, emerges the old-time problem of the dual nature of man,—body and soul, flesh and spirit, under and upper—a problem which the same apostle stated so strongly in his letter to the Romans: 'I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.'

This localization of sin in the members of the body, as though moral evil could reside in the flesh of a man, is simply a popular statement by Paul of things as

they appear, rather than a rigid scientific statement of things as they really are. Like every great teacher, he seeks to popularize an exceedingly abstruse question. But Paul knew what our modern science has so clearly taught, that the flesh, in the common acceptation of that term, does not really come into the question at all. It is entirely a matter of the mind, or, to be correct, of two minds—an upper and a lower—or, as Paul himself has declared, a ‘spiritual’ and a ‘carnal’ mind, that are hostile one to the other. ‘For to be carnally-minded is death,’ says he; ‘but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.’

Now, very appropriately these upper and lower minds have their own respective places of residence in a corresponding upper and lower brain. The upper level of the brain, which occupies the dome of the skull, is the seat and centre of all the higher faculties and functions—reason, judgement, conscience, will, &c. According to Forel, the great brain-specialist, ‘The cerebrum is the crowning point in the evolutionary series.’ It is evolution lifted to its highest power of expression. The cerebellum, or lower level of the brain, on the other hand, occupies the back of the skull, and is the centre of all the appetites, passions, and bodily desires. For example, if a man feels hungry he feels it in the back of his brain really. That is to say, the pneumo-gastric nerve which controls the commissariat department of the body reports to the central dépôt that there is a shortage in supplies. That dépôt is in communication with all the centres

which control the appropriate action for satisfying this demand. Let us suppose that the man who is hungry is without means, and standing in front of food to which he has no right. The optic nerve conveys it to his vision, the olfactory nerve assures him that it is savoury, the pneumo-gastric nerve clamours to be supplied, and all of them together incite the appropriating act which will meet the need of the hour. But before this unanimous resolution of the lower brain can be carried into effect, it has to receive the sanction of the upper brain, and, assuming the hungry man to be also an honest man, the upper brain refuses to give permission to the lower brain to commit the unlawful act. Then comes the tug-of-war, the issue of which will depend upon the amount of self-restraint in the realm of appetite which the upper brain has acquired through successful struggles in the past. Naturally the lower brain resists and resents the restrictions that are sought to be imposed upon it by the upper, and which require it to disappoint its client. It is here that the struggle of life is begotten on which character and destiny are made to turn.

Now in the case of Paul there was nothing doubtful as to the issue of this strife. It had been predetermined by his own finely-cultured will. The lower brain representing the carnal mind had been reduced to subjection. The language in which this is expressed in the original is so picturesque, and smacks so strongly of the prize-ring, that it has been toned down by the translators. Literally, however, it would read, 'I

punch my head and give myself black eyes. I lead my body about as the serf of my mind.'

How was this victory achieved? He tells us in his letter to the Romans from which we have already quoted: 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.' But how does Christ effect this? The answer is that He does it through the brain. Brain has been scientifically defined as 'the organ of mind.' That means that mind is the organist. But which mind? For as we have seen there is a spiritual mind and a carnal mind. This depends upon to which the will of man yields allegiance. If, following the apostle's instruction, we 'let this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus,' then self abdicates the seat of the organ in favour of the Master Musician, who knows every note and stop, and can command the whole range of the instrument He himself has made. Under His touch every part of our nature is harmonized and the manifold music of life is evoked. This, then, is the true end and aim of existence; not the crushing out of our bodily desires, but their harmonization with the Master Will of the universe,—

That mind and soul according well
May make one music as before,
But vaster.

V

MORAL WEATHER-READING

*Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth ;
but how is it that ye do not discern this time ? Yea, and
why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right ?—LUKE xii.
56, 57.*

IN the second of these great verses Christ is seeking to throw men back from trust in external standards of judgement to reliance on their own inherent and organic instincts. There are ~~the~~ two great methods of arriving at truth, and both of them are recognized by Christ in this passage. ~~In the first verse we have indicated~~ the inductive or scientific method. This is the method in which we gather all the facts from as wide a field as possible, and then formulate our theory of the laws and forces of which they are the expression and effect. This is the method indicated by Christ as being followed in arriving at the weather forecasts which were in vogue in His day. He reminded His hearers that certain phenomena always associated with, or followed by, certain classes of weather had been noted and registered by the popular mind. So that, given certain signs, those who read them were able, with a fair amount of reliability, to utter their predictions as to rain or shine. Christ is represented in

this passage as endorsing both the method and accuracy of the generalization at which they had arrived, and He recognizes the practical wisdom which thus turns to account the results of age-long observation for guidance in the immediate present.

But the Great Teacher was reminding them of their common and everyday practice in forecasting physical weather, only that He might employ it for the purpose of rebuking their failure in forecasting moral weather, although the signs were just as patent and as readable as any by which they read the portents of the morning or evening sky. The force of His rebuke lies in the fact that, had they been as careful to note the historical developments of their own time, had they used common ordinary sagacity, such as is displayed by any fisherman on the sea, or shepherd on the hills, then they could not have failed to gather from the facts which were transpiring about them that some great crisis was at hand. Had they been as quick to detect and interpret moral signs as they were those that were physical, they would have been conscious of a great tidal movement in the world of thought and feeling which was at once a challenge to all their moral instincts and aspirations. They were faced, although they knew it not, with an atmospheric disturbance in the spiritual realm, resulting from an incursion of the Divine upon the field of human history. It was a spiritual impulse, vast, mystic, wonderful, projected earthwards from those timeless regions out of which all things come and into which all things haste. Christ's

presence and personality became a disturbing factor in the world of men. The Incarnation introduced a new force into history, so that the world has never since been the same.

From all this I would not be understood to imply that until His earthly advent Christ was not active in the evolutionary process through which the spiritual history of the race had come. On the contrary, it was His indwelling presence and activity during His pre-incarnation days that created the crisis of His coming, and rendered possible His emergence in time, and under time and space conditions. History became so impregnated with the Divine, so saturate with His redeeming purpose ; the times became so full of Him that He broke through them into visibility. He could be kept back no longer ; the veil of the visible order which dropped between Him and the world He loved was rent, and it was rent from His side. Flesh, that had hitherto been the separating medium between God and man, became the medium of contact and divine impartation ; and so, says John : ' The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

This period of manifestation was full of significance for those who had eyes to see and hearts to understand. Indeed, the estimate which men placed on Jesus and their attitude to His teaching became at once an infallible index to their moral whereabouts. ' Every one that is of the truth,' said He, ' heareth My

voice.' A man's loyalty or disloyalty to truth before Christ's coming was thus made manifest. When He appeared, His very presence became a judgement-day, before which men were cleared or condemned. Christ's challenge to the Pharisees in this passage was an indictment of their moral obliquity. He had called them 'blind guides,' and their blindness had been self-induced. Through playing fast and loose with conviction, they were unable to interpret the moral significance of the times. They could not discern nor interpret the trend of events. It is all very well to tell a man that a red sky in the morning is a presage of storm, but what if the man be colour-blind? These men were morally colour-blind, and they had brought it on themselves. Unless a man be loyal to the best he knows, his knowledge begins to deteriorate. We must be constantly taking up our perceptions of truth and duty into life, or they will become blurred and indistinct. They must as soon as possible be projected outwards on to the field of action and translated into terms of conduct. This is the only way in which to fix them as a permanent possession and as points from which to move to further accessions. Nowhere is the law which determines that a man who does not utilize shall neutralize more rigid in its working. We are all busy doing either moral addition or subtraction. Those who are doing addition are those who are loyal to the principle of development, and prompt to take their duty by the hand. Those who are doing subtraction are those who are allowing their power,

whether in the shape of knowledge or any other asset, to run to waste. Faculty must either be multiplied or stultified. There is no such state as that of stable equilibrium in the moral world. We are dealing with a law that admits of no exemptions. It controls alike the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual spheres, and rules them each with a rod of iron. It was in accordance with this law that the Pharisees became blind to Christ and all for which He stood. It is a law that is more tolerant of misuse and even abuse than it is of disuse. The recuperative powers of nature will seek to remedy the former, but the latter cannot be tolerated. It is regarded as a capital offence, and the inexorable penalty is death to the power that is not worked. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.' The eye that loves darkness cannot bear the light, and that it cannot, is the infallible sign of deterioration and decay. Christ's reasoning is that if you will but open your eyes to the facts of the moral order as you do to those of the material world, you will be able to read and understand. You can have a spiritual science as well as a physical science if you will but follow the inductive method.

But even the facts of the physical order do not reveal themselves to every one alike. The trained eye can see more through the microscope or the telescope than the ordinary vision can discern. Yet all the training in the world would not avail to put scientific

truth within the grasp of every mind. Even with regard to certain matters relating to merely physical discovery there would seem to be a certain, almost superhuman sensitiveness required. I was watching only recently the performance of some friends who were practising with the divining-rod in the search for water. It would appear that certain subjective conditions in the way of specialized physical qualities are necessary on the part of the holder of the rod, in order that the indications may manifest themselves through it, for although it twisted about in the most lively manner when held by my friends, it was absolutely tremorless when held by me over precisely the same spot. This abnormal physical sensitiveness was not the result of practice, but would seem to be the special gift of a particular class. But moral sensitiveness, the power to appreciate the unseen order, to catch the voice and the vision of the Son of Man, this is within the reach of every one. You can so train your moral sensibilities that you will carry about with you an unerring criterion of truth. All that is required is a spirit of simple, downright honesty. Have you had difficulty in 'placing' Jesus Christ? Do you hesitate about handing in your allegiance to Him as Master and Lord? Then try the inductive method. Get into correspondence with Christ's earthly life, gather together all the facts about Him. Confront them, extract their law, find out the force of which they are the expression, and you will discover with Bushnell that you cannot classify Him among the

sons of men. According to Christ's teaching, any fair-minded conclusion from the facts as they presented themselves to the mind of the ordinary observer of that day, was bound to endorse the validity of His Messianic claims. Anyhow, He was prepared to leave it at that, saying in effect, 'Only bring the same ordinary intelligence to bear upon the facts as you see them in Me and My work, that you employ in looking for and interpreting the weather-signs of earth and sky, and I do not fear the result.'

Now, if this were true when Christ spoke these words, and when the dynamic of His life and work had hardly made itself felt outside the narrow limits of the Syrian Province, what is to be said of the facts to-day, after nineteen centuries of Christian evolution in many lands? Historic Christianity has got to be accounted for in any scientific treatment of history. Here is a force which has never been so active, so protean, or so energetic in its manifestations as it is to-day. It is the vitalizing soul of a thousand progressive and liberating institutions. It has been creative of countless secondary forces which, though they may have forgotten the source of their initial impulse, have been mingling with the life of the world to sweeten its bitterness and harmonize its strifes.

Your homes are protected, your property secured, your lives more sacred, your liberty more sure, and all your commercial interests at home and abroad more safe, because of the Man who moved about and

taught in Galilee two thousand years ago. We have our ills, it is true, distempers and disorders that breed distress and sometimes despair. But that they produce this feeling at all is the hope of the race and the pledge of its final joy. That these things are growing more intolerable every day is due to what Jesus taught. Things are far from right when, as now, nearly the whole world is involved in war. But we owe it to Jesus Christ that we know these things to be wrong, and that we are trying to put them right.

All the great impulses that are making for the amelioration of human ills and the rectification of human wrongs are found taking their rise away back among the slopes of the Judean hills, or on the foreshore of the Galilean Sea ; and it is only the veriest truism to say that with the universalizing of the Christ-spirit will come the freedom and blessedness of the race. The implication from Christ's teaching is that the man that cannot see this is either defective in understanding or insincere in heart. To those who are not capable of these great generalizations such as the Saviour has indicated, He suggests that the method be reversed. Instead of starting from without and gathering all the facts into view, start from within and work from the instincts and intuitions, those great foreshadowings which Tennyson calls 'the mighty hopes that make us men.' Christ throws us back among our innate ideas—our original moral outfit—and assures us that if we will but be loyal to their

leading, we shall pass from these local points of moral manifestation furnished with a criterion of moral truth that will serve as a test-stone to which every system may be subjected and its genuineness or worthlessness revealed.

Now, every man is conscious of possessing an inner standard of what is fair and honourable, to which every proposition must be submitted for judgement. What is known to be bad or good, beneficial or detrimental, is simply the sum of individual judgements which have accumulated through centuries and registered themselves in the form of a corporate conscience or communal sense of right. These standardized opinions have come ultimately to have the force of law. Society had discovered from age-long experience that certain courses of behaviour make for concord and happiness, and the contrary courses for discord and misery. But all law, whether common or statute, has to be traced back to the individual mind for its origin and sanction. Nor does this in any way weaken the assumption that the Divine Will is the ultimate source and fount of the law. Emerson has finely said that in spite of all appearances the nature of things works for truth and righteousness continually. But He who made the nature of things made man ; and the truth and righteousness of the one must have their correlate and counterpart in the truth and righteousness of the other.

The demand for law and order without has its correspondent imperative within. This demand in

the physical universe is promptly met, for there it is simply dealing with soulless matter, through which it runs unchallenged, now curving a planet to its orbit and now shaping the petals of a flower. But the demand within has to deal with the spiritual, with mind and will. Hence instead of fiat and the ruthless compulsion of irresistible force, we have beseeching entreaty, tender persuasion, and every moving consideration addressed to reason, conscience, and will. It is because Christ is so sure of His ground, because, as the evangelist says, 'He knows what is in man,' that He so confidently throws us back on our organic instincts. He says in effect, 'You carry about with you a set of moral weights and a pair of moral scales. You need never be fooled.' As long as men are sincerely anxious to know the truth about things, they cannot go far wrong. But it is this very quality of sincerity that is in question in our text. The hypocrisy which Christ was accustomed to charge against the religious teachers of His day was clearly not a monopoly of those pretenders to piety. It had infected the mass. The whole multitude is here placed by Christ in the same category and classified as 'hypocrites,' who are hastening on to judgement and their sure unmasking. This is the one unpardonable sin—pretence. It blinds the eyes, it hardens the heart, and casts men in every kind of moral disability till—

With all their conscience and one eye askew,
So false, they partly take themselves for true.

Until such falseness is renounced by us, the light of truth can never fall upon our vision nor its accents be detected by our ears. Having eyes, we shall see not, having ears we shall hear not, nor understand with our hearts the things that belong to our peace.

VI

OUR GREATEST NATIONAL ASSET

He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children.—MAL. iv. 6.

I HAVE chosen the words of the text because, when interpreted in their widest sense, they declare the mark of the new era to be that of changing the thought and feeling of the world's thinkers and leaders in regard to the claims of the little child. We undoubtedly owe it to the gospel of Jesus that the children are at length coming into their own. Never was there a time in the history of the race when so much thought and effort was concentrated on the problem of childhood—its possibilities and its perils—as there is to-day. Neither was there ever such store set on the young life of the community as since the outbreak of the war. Every nation that has been involved in the struggle will from now on require to give the gravest attention to its reserves, in the way of the fresh young life that is pouring in to reinforce its depleted population. Our war-debt in the way of money will, of course, be a serious item; but more serious still will be our shortage in the matter of men. This really is the only deficit that matters. The greatest asset of any nation is its rising generation. Our output in gold, silver or copper, in tin, iron, or coal, is not a circum-

stance compared with our output in boys and girls, nor does the production of wheat or wool begin to compare for importance with the production of men. Judged purely on the basis of economic value, the importance of the child has been heightened by the war to an immeasurable degree. Hence it is that, apart altogether from the supreme moral requirements of the situation, every possible means should be pressed into service to safeguard the child from such perils as would reduce his value as an asset of the State.

Upon us as a people is imposed the obligation of ensuring the future well-being and stability of the nation by putting our conscience into both the quality and quantity of the manhood and womanhood we bequeath to the State. The business is entirely in our hands in regard to those who are Australian-born, and we should see to it that all imported human stock has a clean bill of mental, physical, and, if possible, moral health. The whole matter is of such primary and vital importance that we might well spend time, thought, and money, in facing the problem as to how we can best conserve and develop the child-life of the State, so as to grow a wise and winsome womanhood and a manhood clean, straight, and strong. Let the State be thus supplied with the best human values, and the worth of every other possession will be heightened a hundred-fold. But pour into the life of the body corporate a childhood diseased, weakened, or morally tainted by the sins or neglect of the parents, and all values will straightway depreciate, for the very stability

of the State itself becomes forfeit when the great laws of physical and moral hygiene are defied. One would never dream, from the haphazard way in which child-life is treated in countless homes, that the youth of the country constituted its truest and most reproductive wealth. But the people form the organic national capital, so that, once a nation's birthrate enters upon a course of decline, it is heading straight-way for the abyss. It is only a question of arithmetic, unless some unexpected factor emerges, as to how soon will come the end.

Nor is it merely diminishing numbers in such a case that are the only element to be reckoned with, but something far more serious, of which they are but an outward and visible symbol, namely, a certain moral insensibility and repudiation of responsibility, which strikes at the very root of social efficiency. The children of such parents, even if they suffer nothing through heredity, in the way of transmitted mental and moral defect, yet will speedily show deterioration through their home environment, for there is nothing so sensitive to atmosphere, whether physical or moral, as a little child. Thus, from such conditions there results a multiplication of the unfit, whose unhappy existence, of course, artificial protection may serve to prolong, and through prolonging encourage to reproduce, till we are faced with the anomaly which exists to-day of finding ourselves spending seven times as much money annually per head on the care and training of the mentally defective as we do on

those who are mentally sound, upon whom all the responsibilities of shaping the destinies of this great country must presently fall. We are not complaining of the amount spent, or the care bestowed on the mentally unfit. Both on ethical and sentimental grounds, even at the cost of severe economic loss, we can do no other for those who are thus disqualified for the race of life. But who does not feel that if it be regarded as an ethical necessity thus to spend, as we do, £47 per head per annum for the care of defectives, then £6 5s. per head hardly meets the requirements of the case for training the effectives upon whose shoulders the burdens of business and government must rest.

Viewed merely as an investment, then, cutting out every moral consideration, and coming up to this question as a purely financial proposition, there is nothing that can remotely compare in value with the efficient training of our children. Nothing is too great to do for them. No sacrifice is too great to make in order to give the coming generation a superior vantage-ground from that on which we started or on which we stand. There is no field that will prove so reproductive, or into which we can cast with greater confidence the seed of time and thought, of care and cash. Or, dropping the agricultural for a mining metaphor, there is no 'claim' that will pay such dividends for the working. The ore is visible, it is already 'at grass,' as the miners say. There is no machinery necessary to bring it within reach of treatment. It

is ready to our hand. Moreover, it is rich and virgin ore. We spend vast sums every year in the erection of costly plant and the opening up of workings, in the hope of discovering payable quantities of gold or silver, copper or tin, and we do it often on the most outside chance of success. But, here, around about us, within and at our very doors, is a visible and tangible certainty, with possibilities of richness in returns such as the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the imagination conceived, and yet we have not the sense to see it or the wit to seize. In the search for merely material products, we engage finely-trained and highly-paid experts, men skilled in mechanical, chemical, and electrical science, with the most up-to-date methods and appliances for the treatment of mineral ores—and all this, mark you, merely on the chances of the game, for it is a proverb that ‘Nobody knows what’s in front of the pick.’ Indeed, as a matter of fact, and of carefully-wrought calculation, the amount of money put into mining far exceeds anything that has ever been taken out. So that, if a balance were struck, the preponderance would be found heavily on the debit side. On the other hand, there is not a single normal child who, if properly handled and wisely trained, would not infinitely outweigh in return-value to the State the cost that his training involved. The money we put into education is not spent, any more than the seed-wheat is spent that is being scattered in the brown furrows of the land; and just as it pays to scrap old machinery in favour of up-to-date plant in the sowing

and harvesting of the golden grain, so it will pay us to put our capital into the very finest educational institutions and methods for the training of our youth.

Inasmuch as the very handling of the nursery is significant, and so much depends upon the maternal influence both before and after birth, it will be well worth our statesmen's while to make such provision for training in the duties of motherhood, instruction in first aid, in nursing and domestic economy, as will secure even the poorest child against the perils of ignorance and the incompetence that ignorance breeds. No conception can be formed of the misery and money that might be saved did we give one tithe of our attention to the causes of crime, poverty, and disease that we devote to their cure. If it be objected that State interference is to be resisted when it comes to the question of exercising any authority over the indoor life of the people, lest it should encroach upon and impair the sanctity of the home, the reply is that it is only by the adoption of some constructive method of education, such as preparing the girl for the duties of wifehood and motherhood, that the more drastic interference of the State can be avoided which we too often witness at a later stage, when evils have been wrought that no hand can heal. It would indeed be a lamentable thing to weaken the sense of individual home-responsibility by transferring it in any degree to the State. But it is difficult to see how the proper education of those who are to undertake the duties of mothering the coming generation could work in

such a disastrous direction, seeing that its whole machinery would be motived and administered with precisely the opposite end in view. The whole aim and effort of the State should be so directed as to deepen, rather than diminish, the sense of personal stewardship on the part of its citizens, and it would be with this purpose in view as a great regulative principle that such a policy as we have suggested would be framed and pursued. By the time the State gets the children for education in its schools a great deal has already been done which ought, in the interests of the child, to be corrected, but which the teacher is powerless to undo, or even in some instances to seek to undo, even if the restrictions of the Act permitted the attempt. Ideas have been created, habits of thought induced, and habits of life already adopted, which, even if corrected during school hours, would only tend to reassert themselves again in the atmosphere of the home, unless a new sense of school public opinion can be created.

It is on this that the most advanced writers on education rely far more than on any specific teaching of morals. The creation of an atmosphere, the generation of *esprit de corps* among the scholars, and the feeling that certain courses of action are 'no class' or not 'good form' is one of the most powerful correctives of evil and stimuli of good. A remarkable instance of what can be done in this regard is quoted by Sir Martin Conway from the Blue-Book entitled *Annual Report for 1913 of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board*

of Education (237), wherein is related how the children of the Hughes Fields Girls' Council School at Greenwich were taught the rudiments of cleanliness and decent living. 'This school is situated in an extremely poor part of Deptford. Indeed, the condition of the children attending the school was at one time so trying to those who came in contact with them that the staff were constantly absent through illness, it became impossible to keep supply-teachers more than a few days, and the attendance was frequently as low as 60-70 per cent. for the whole year.' Accordingly, nine years ago a new régime was introduced, consisting of lessons in hygiene, inspections, and doing things. The lessons may be imagined. They were only given to the older children. The inspections were daily ; boots, clothes, hair, hands, nails, handkerchiefs, the basins and towels with which they had washed,—all were looked at, and the dirty and untidy were shamed by being put right in the presence of the class. This was the real educational force. A new public opinion was created, and it was fostered by such exercises as tooth-brush drill, nail-trimming drill, and so forth. The children were also asked at what hour they went to bed the previous night and whether they slept with an open window. The master of another large school invoked the aid of public opinion by having a prepared blackboard in each class-room, with spaces for the insertion of figures detailing the number present with clean boots, collars, nails, teeth, handkerchiefs, and 'open windows last night.' The result of this effort

after nine years on the Deptford school is thus described :—‘ The attendance now averages over 92 per cent. ; the members of the staff are no longer frequently absent on sick leave or desirous of obtaining new posts ; the children now bear the closest inspection and are able to progress normally in the ordinary subjects.’ It is clear from all this that there must have set in a reaction in the home as a result of this régime, so that, instead of the home recapturing the child for dirt and slovenliness, the child captures the home for sweetness and light.

Now, while all this and a great deal more could be said about the rights of the parent to the child, yet it has also to be borne in mind that the child is not the exclusive property of its parents. The State has certain claims upon it, which it tacitly assumes in some cases, and in others openly declares. I do not here propose to define the boundaries where parental rights end and State rights begin. These are movable frontiers that will vary with circumstances, and are to be determined by the necessities of corporate self-defence and well-being. But in as far as the children of the country are the property of the country, do they constitute a kind of ‘ trust estate,’ for the development and administration of which each generation is a steward for the generation to come. Of course, there are questions involved in any adequate treatment of this subject which would take a score of Sunday nights to discuss. Nor would the time be spent in vain if we could be made to see how funda-

mental to the stability and well-being of the social order is the protection of the child. There is absolutely no question of modern times that can compare in importance with the problem of how to deal with the new human material that is perpetually passing into our hands, so as to fashion it into the fibre and fabric of a strong and capable national life.

When all is said and done, the chief factor in education is the home, and the chief factor in the home is the mother. She sets the key, gives the tone, creates the atmosphere. There is nothing in the world that counts for so much in this regard as motherhood. The science of biology, simply as a matter of cold, calm fact, puts motherhood at the pinnacle of evolution. 'Nature never made anything higher than a mother,' says Henry Drummond. She worked up through the lower forms till she reached the mammalia, and because there could be nothing higher, she stopped. The mammalia, or the 'mothers,' are her supreme effort—her *magnum opus*—or, to put it in another way, true and tender motherhood is the highest human expression of the Almighty Father's heart. Nature, then, climbs to her apex, not in the father, but in the mother. 'Men' says Naumann, 'invent tools; women bear children. Men forge arms; from mothers come soldiers; mothers contribute most to the greatness of the nation. They, with their children, are the transforming element. When the mothers of a nation grow weak, their collapse, notwithstanding all careful culture, means the decline of the nation into senility.' The

father is of course a useful thing to have about the home, but the mother is the home. It centres in her ; it radiates from her. She is its creative spirit, its presiding genius. She is the first one the child asks for when he comes in from school, and the last he looks for to tuck him in at night. ' Where's mother ? ' is the universal cry in every household. The father, full of good intentions, inquires, ' Won't I do ? ' ' No ; I want mother,' says the child ; and it is because mother means so much and meets the outreaching need of the child, because the child can tell mother things that it would never dream of confiding to its father, that mother makes the home.

But if the mother counts for so much in the handling and training of the child, how supreme and pressing is the need that she herself should be so schooled in all the requisites of her great office, as to be able to shape the young and plastic life to highest, holiest ends ! Let us only have mothers who will live thus in the lives of their children and lead them upward to that God who, because He is perfect in love, is both father and mother in one, then our family circles will be such that, wherever our boys may wander, their dearest, sweetest thoughts will be of home. Though they move through beauteous sights and ravishing sounds, they will still turn in their quiet and thoughtful moods to bygone days and cherish memories of home and mother.

VII

THE SURGICAL WORD

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.—JOHN XV. 3.

THE problem of how to live a clean life has with more or less pressure weighed upon the human mind and challenged its power of thought from the grey beginning of years. It is a problem the solution of which would practically settle every other problem that is vexing the minds of statesmen and reformers the whole world round.

The highest spirits of every country and of every age have come up to this question counting every other consideration as but dust and chaff, compared with that of finding the path of heart-purity and peace. But baffled, perplexed, and confounded, they have confessed themselves hopelessly beaten, and have been plunged into a condition of intellectual confusion and despair. As for the people generally, disappointed in their spiritual guides, and yet stung by the consciousness of guilt, they have sought along a thousand paths of propitiatory pain and tears and death—but sought in vain—to escape from the fleet-footed Nemesis of retribution that follows hard upon the heels of wrong.

It might appear as if there were two problems here, but as a matter of fact, they are but two sides of the same problem. Pardon for sin and purity of life are respectively the negative and positive sides of the same thing, so that the two are really one. The higher man rises in the moral scale, the less is he concerned about escaping from the consequences of his wrong-doing, and the more consuming becomes his desire to be rid of its stain. Not the penalty of his sin, but its pollution, depresses his spirit and shadows his life. There is in every man a divine and deeply-seated instinct which is intolerant of sin, and clamours to be clean. Every time we make a wrong choice and do the forbidden thing, we violate this instinct. We come up against the nature of things. We are at war with the 'God of things as they are.' It is this perpetual feud within the secret place of our own personality which divides the life against itself and puts conscience and conduct in different camps. Until these two can be co-ordinated, with conscience as king, the search for purity must end in despair. It is only in the unification of this internal duality that we are to find the way of permanent peace. This unification has been the quest of all the ages. To set these two at one—the God and the man within us—has been the aim and effort of all religion in all its multiplied forms. To effect this at-one-ment Christ lived, loved, laboured, suffered, and died. This was the 'atonement,' the reconciliation of opposing forces, and it was effected by what Paul calls the '*word of the*

Cross. But a word is effective only as it enfolds and expresses an idea. So that according to this view we are to be saved, unified, pacified, purified, by the entrance into the mind of a new, regnant, and rectifying idea. It was a wrong idea that put the race on the downward track; and it is only by a right idea coming in and displacing it that man can be arrested, reversed, and re-directed on the upward way. Hence the declaration of the text: 'Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.'

This is the second time within the course of a few hours that Christ had thus pronounced the disciples 'clean.' Before that acted parable in which He washed their feet, Peter had expostulated against the Lord of all stooping to so menial a task. In His reply Christ said among other things. 'Ye are clean, yet not all.' To which the Evangelist adds—doubtless with the wisdom that came after the event: 'For He knew who it was that should betray Him, therefore He said, "Ye are not all clean."' But when in our text He says, 'Ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you,' the question naturally arises, What word? Is it to be regarded as the entire course of their spiritual culture through which He had led them? or does it refer to some definite utterance, some mystical wonder-working word that leapt from His lips at a spiritual crisis in their history and purged the hateful poison from their blood? Or yet again, was He speaking in corporate terms merely, and referring to the word of dismissal by which He sent

Judas out to work his deed of shame, thus ridding the little band of the traitor's presence and cutting away a diseased and unfruitful branch ?

There is something to be said for each of these views. But the point upon which I wish to fix your minds is this, that when Christ thus speaks, His word is more than a word, it is a deed. In the very course of its utterance it fulfils itself.

In the story of Creation we read 'And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.' But the sublimity of these words is lost in our English version. In their Hebrew form, and stripped of all the particles with which the English translation is weakened, they read 'God said, "Light be, and Light was." ' There is no secondary agent employed or required. The word itself, laden as it were with luminous potency, discharges its radiant contents, and floods the world with happy golden light. The word is a self-effectuating energy. It carries itself out, and becomes in act and fact what it expresses in will.

Just as in Christ the Word of God becomes flesh, so in creation that word became light, heat, motion, magnetism, solids, liquids, gases, sun, moon, stars, grass, herbs, trees, birds, beasts, fishes, and so on and up through all the ascending circles and grades of life till man crowns the order of created things. The divine word thus becomes the prelude to the appearance of that for which it stands. All God has to do is to speak, and it is done, to command and it stands forth.

Christ claimed for His words the unique quality of livingness. When He said, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life,' He must have meant to distinguish them from the words of ordinary human speech. These living and life-giving utterances sprang from His lips as fully equipped ministers to do His pleasure. The very passage of His thought into speech became a creative force. It let loose a spring, it released a store of energy. Thus His words not only fell on the human ear as vocables, they passed straightway into human life and history as a vital and vitalizing force. This penetrative power of the divine word is again and again referred to in the Scriptures under the symbol of a two-edged sword. Listen to the writer to the Hebrews : 'The word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.'

In the vision of St. John the Son of Man is described as having eyes as a flame of fire, while 'out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp two-edged sword,'—the symbol of His word—'For the sword of the Spirit' says Paul, 'is the word of God.' From all of which it would appear that by the Divine Word we are really to understand the divine Personality in process of self-projection. It is the active principle of the divine nature in emanation ; it is His mode of self-manifestation and self-multiplication, working everywhere for the separation of man from sin. Even

though that sin may have wrought itself into the very tissues of heart and brain, and be bred into the very bone and marrow, this searching surgical word will spy it out, and cut it out! Let but the cry for deliverance escape the enmeshed soul, and swift as light will the sword-flash of the divine word shear the toils asunder and cleanse the sinner from his cleaving sin.

Whenever Christ spoke the words 'Be clean!' the cleansing immediately set in. The word itself was charged with cleansing efficacy. With Him the utterance was both the expression of will and the transmission of energy, while both presupposed and indeed required willingness on the part of the subject to become the field of their saving force. So that here we have to distinguish between the *creative* and the *regenerative* word of God. The first runs unimpeded and unchallenged through all worlds, overhead curving the planets to their mighty orbits, underfoot shaping the graceful petals of the flower; but whether burning in midnight brilliance or breathing in morning fragrance, always moving on to its goal without regard to human will. But when it comes to the regenerative word—it waits for man's reception and consent. When Christ deals with mere matter He simply commands. There is no argument, no remonstrance, no appeal. But when He deals with mind there is beseeching entreaty, tender persuasion, and the whole Divine ministry of long-suffering patience and all-hopeful love. Thus it comes to pass that when the moral will of Christ seeks to become active in the field

of the human heart, the energies that are gathered up and translated into words for the purpose of transmission must, in order to prove efficacious, be re-translated by the recipient into their original potency before he can know their saving and renewing power. This is the function of faith, to 'receive with meekness the implanted word' into the soil of the mind, and there in the secret place of personality to make these life-laden syllables render up their redeeming energies, till by processes of subjection and sublimation they reduce the whole nature to oneness with the mind and heart of God.

It is only through the mind that the life can be changed. The first step is mental ; this is the meaning of the word 'repent.'—'Change your mind.' As it begins, so it proceeds ; and when Paul says, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' he condenses the entire process into a phrase. But letting Christ's mind be in us means the letting in of Christ's thought, which comes to the same thing as the letting in of His words, the transmitters of His thought. Hence 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.' Not dormantly, but actively and unfoldingly. It will work its own transformations, rectifying the will, adjusting the conscience, and sanctifying the thoughts and affections of the heart, till the whole nature trembles into harmony with the Divine.

Thus by admitting into the soul a new life-principle, of which the Word is the symbol, we have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

VIII

CULPABLE IGNORANCE

If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.—

LUKE XIX. 42.

(Read Isaiah i.)

THIS is a moral physician's diagnosis of a nation's malady, and his despairing prognosis of its doom. Up to a point there is a striking parallel between the lesson suggested to be read and the setting of the text. An even cursory study of the former will reveal three great divisions :

First, *Diagnosis* : ' the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores : they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.'

Second, *Prescription* : ' Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

Third, an alternative *Prognosis* : ' If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land : but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

The startling feature of Christ's diagnosis is that it is accompanied by no prescription, but is swiftly followed by a prognosis of doom. The case is pronounced hopeless, and the tragedy of the thing is that it need not have been. Remedy after remedy had been prescribed through the years, only, however, to be spat out by the nation which, under the spell of some strange sorcery, preferred the way of moral disease and death. It is ever thus both with nations and with individuals. They effect their own undoing, their troubles are home-made. The weapons that lay them low may hurtle in from abroad, but they were all forged at home. ' O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ' is the epitaph which, with the mere change of name, may be written over every world-power that has ceased to be. No nation ever yet was destroyed that was not self-destroyed. When child-life is sacrificed by negative and positive infanticide, when home-life permits the violation of the domestic sanctities, when social life is honeycombed through with falseness and sensuality, when commercial life is an organized system of fleecing the public by means of fraudulent balance-sheets, lying prospectuses, and worthless shares, when political life degenerates into exploitation of the public purse by place-hunters who turn positions of civic trust into means for promoting party and personal ends, it is

time such a community was 'passed out' to make room for something morally sound and fit. There is only one thing to do with rottenness, whether physical or moral, and that is to bury it, and all the buried nations of the earth before they were buried were morally dead and decomposed.

Now it is a striking fact that, both in Isaiah's and Christ's estimation, the national degeneration is made due to ignorance. This in each case, you notice, is stated to be the immediate cause of the nation's distemper. 'Israel doth not know,' says God through the prophet. 'If thou hadst known,' says Christ to the same nation centuries later. But it may be asked, Ought such an appalling doom to be made to set in on the track of mere ignorance? Isaiah rates the intelligence of Israel as being lower than that of the dull-brained ox or the stubborn ass. Even these obtuse and slow-witted creatures are shown to exhibit some intelligence, not merely instinctive knowledge such as the recognition of their own kind, but acquired knowledge of persons and places, so that they could distinguish between friend and stranger, and knew where the fodder was stored; while beings capable of perception and reflection could live and move amid daily manifestations of the divine goodness and power, and yet remain as impervious and unresponsive to their influence as the granite rock to the sunshine and the shower, but alas! without the rock's excuse; for theirs was a hardness and insensibility entirely self-induced. This is why they were to blame. For

where knowledge is possible, ignorance becomes culpable. Ignorance of the law, as every one knows, is not an admissible plea against the punishment for its infraction. The inevitable reply to such a plea must always be, 'If you did not know, it was your business to know, and therefore the law must take its course.' But the case under discussion here was infinitely worse than this, because it was a case of knowledge that had degenerated into ignorance through being perverted—a case of sight that had turned to blindness through deliberate disloyalty to the light.

Of course, as indicated by Isaiah and Christ, this was a national trouble, but, as we cannot too often be reminded, that which is national is only that which is individual expanded and multiplied. National ignorance is the bunching of individual ignorance, but it cannot be corrected or instructed in the bunch, it must be resolved into its units. Observe how the State guards the community from growing up in ignorance of secular knowledge. It provides a highly organized and splendidly staffed system of education free and compulsory, but in order to render it effective, it has so to individualize it, that no would-be defaulter shall escape the benefit that is sought to be bestowed. To this end a staff of truant-officers is constantly at work hunting up the strays. Moreover every educationist will tell you that even though you have the children gathered into ^{poor} classes, the best results are obtainable only as personal relations are set up by the teacher with each individual scholar under his care.

But just as a boy may succeed in putting himself and keeping himself outside this system, just as he may grow up in total ignorance of how to read and write in spite of all this splendid provision made for his instruction, so, notwithstanding the full blaze of moral light which has been made available for the race, the individual may close his eyes and choose the darkness of ignorance and death in the error of his ways.

‘And this is the condemnation,’ says Christ, ‘that light is come into the world, and that men loved darkness rather than the light.’ Had the world been loyal to the light it had before Christ came, it would have recognized Him. ‘Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.’ But the world knew Him not, and, in crucifying Him, their ignorance passed out of its negative stage of mere apathy into one of positive hostility. Still, it was the hostility of ignorance, as is clear from the Saviour’s words in the hour of His dread agony, ‘They know not what they do.’ But, I repeat, it was an ignorance self-induced, for when men will not do what they know, they cease to know what they do. But when nations no longer know what they are doing, they become a menace, and their day of abused opportunity withdraws its light and passes into the night of dismissal and defeat.

Now, let it be noted that what is called the day of opportunity differs from the day of twenty-four hours in that it cannot be measured, nor its duration determined. The ordinary day dawns at an ascertainable time ; it slowly broadens until it reaches the splendour

of its noon, then just as slowly does it draw itself through golden hours of equal measure, till through narrowing twilight it deepens into night. It is a measurable march that nothing can either hasten or retard. But the day of opportunity moves through no such cycle of calculable change. It may rush from dawn to noon and from noon to night within a single hour, or again it may stretch itself out to months, or lengthen into years. One never knows how soon its dusk may gather, and all its golden offers turn to grey. And yet men fool away their chances as though they were going to dangle for ever within their grasp. ¶ To see men dallying with great occasions when the tide is at the flood, and failing to take the current as it serves, is pitiable even when the voyage which invites has simply the markets of the present world in view. But when it is the business of eternity that is claiming attention in vain, when golden chances in the realm of character offer only to slip past unheeded without embrace or response till the soul that should be riding the high seas of spiritual freedom and prosperity is bound in shallows and in miseries, the mere sport of wind and wave, or the slave of some down-dragging sin, we are confronted with a tragedy so appalling as to challenge even the pity and expostulation of Hell. Indeed, Christ does go so far as to represent one of the unhappy denizens of that dark abode as moved with compassionate fear lest his five brothers miss their chance of life, and praying that one from the dead might be sent to warn them lest the day of their salva-

tion close in a night of dreadful doom. Salvation offers now; there is no authority to extend it till to-morrow. There may be no earthly to-morrow for you. An accident in the street, a floating germ of meningitis on the evening air, rupture of a tiny blood-vessel in the brain, and the day of life and the day of grace may together close. But even suppose that the opportunity is repeated to-morrow, it may find you with no corresponding desire. Desire is not subject to the will. You are face to face with two stern and unbending laws, nay three: the law of lessening opportunity, the law of diminished desire, and the law of decreasing ability. Together these three are closing against you the door of life and opportunity. Once closed, that door never opens. When it closes, as close it must and will, may it shut us all in, and not out, from the marriage supper of the Lamb!

IX

SIN AS DISLOYALTY

Is the young man Absalom safe ?—2 SAM. xviii. 29.

THE chapter from which this text is chosen is one of the most powerfully dramatic within the whole range of sacred literature. The writer must have been a man who not only stood near the characters he portrays, but deeply felt the incidents he so livingly describes. This chapter is the work of no merely mechanical scribe, but of a great sympathetic soul. No dry-as-dust historian, simply bent on chronicling the incidents of this time, could have made the narrative throb with the passion and pathos which palpitate in the verses of which it is composed. Whatever our theory of inspiration, here at least is the true *vox humana* which appeals to every heart—the one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

The story of treason and revolt with which the narrative deals is one of the most irredeemably treacherous that history records. It discloses a twofold guilt—a double wrong. First of all it is a revolt against law and constitutional order as expressed in the person of David the king. Secondly, it is a revolt against paternal love as gathered up and expressed in the character of David the father. Now

this opens up a wide field for discussion; too wide, indeed, for our compass to-day. We shall do little more than deal partially with the first, though, in case it should be forgotten later, let it be stated now that all sin, yours, mine and every one's, is revolt, and wears this double aspect. It may be regarded as either the violation of a law or the wounding of a heart, according as God is viewed, either as the Sovereign Lawgiver whose authority we have defied, or as a loving Father whose expectations we have disappointed, and whose love we have grieved.

With regard to Absalom's revolt, let it be remembered that he took advantage of a misunderstanding which existed between David and the sons of Judah. From the commencement of David's reign there had been friction through the anointing of one of Saul's sons as an opposition king. The adjustment of this business was a difficult and delicate task requiring all David's tact, but in spite of all his attempts at conciliation there was a smouldering fire of discontent ever ready to burst into the flame of civil war. It may be also that the tribesmen of Judah, resenting the removal of the seat of government from Hebron to Jerusalem, and feeling they were not made enough of by the king, cooled off in their loyalty to the throne. Moreover, it may also be that the crimes of the royal household had something to do with chilling their zeal, and thus rendering easy the work of undoing on which Absalom was set. For four years did this treacherous prince secretly lay his plans, stealing the

hearts of Israel from their rightful king by flattering words and promises of preferment if he should come to power.

Among the first to forsake the ranks of the loyalists was Ahithophel, David's famous counsellor. That so old and shrewd an adviser should have taken such a step, and so miscalculated the issue as to join the rebel forces, has often elicited surprise. But doubtless there were family reasons that weighed with Ahithophel, and in those days as in these, family considerations often outweighed the interests of State. Possibly the fact that Bathsheba, whom David had seduced from Uriah, was Ahithophel's granddaughter, had something to do with the action. How could the old man bear to see his grandchild, who had clambered about his knee and hung around his neck, the shameless and willing consort of a man, even if he were a king, who had cruelly murdered her husband in order to gratify his guilty love? You say 'How was any one to know that Uriah had not fallen through sheer fortune of war?' To which I reply: 'Joab knew'; and what Joab knew he was always prepared to use. Depend upon it, David had placed himself in Joab's power from the moment he wrote that letter which doomed Uriah to his death. Had it been merely a verbal message or direction he might have been in a position to deny it with some chance of success; but a letter! What could be more damning proof of David's guilt? And you may be quite sure that Joab never destroyed that letter, but kept it to use as occasion might require,

for the sons of Zeruiah were ever too hard for David.

How far this feeling against David prevailed among others of the people, and what use was made of it by the emissaries of Absalom in their canvass for the rebel prince, cannot, of course, be determined. But in a sense this rebellion must be regarded, in part at least, as the harvest of David's own sowing. Indeed, the sin of Absalom was simply David's sin translated into national terms. David had stolen the heart of Bathsheba from her lawful husband ; now Absalom steals the hearts of Israel from their lawful king. It is the same sin, only written in bolder characters and over a wider range. David was doomed never to hear or see the last of his transgression. It was constantly reproducing itself and emerging in new and ugly forms. Well might he cry in the anguish of his penitential Psalm, ' My sin is ever before me,' for it was literally true. It is doubtful whether David ever had a day of unmixed happiness from the moment of his fall. He must ever have been tormented in the flame of its memory. How the thought that no restitution was possible to the man he had wronged—the man who a score of times had risked his life in David's cause—must have pressed upon his spirit and shadowed his life ! What were all the splendours of an Oriental court and all the pomp and pride of rulership to a man who had so signally failed to rule himself, and whose conscience was stained by so dark and deadly a crime ! If I know anything of David's

heart then, he would have relinquished with rapture a thousand thrones to have regained the clear conscience and the unstained record of his shepherd days. But you say 'God had forgiven him!' Aye: but he could never forgive himself, and now that he saw his sin reproducing itself in his son, his life must indeed have become a burden too heavy to bear. He had violated the eternal moral order, only to find himself outwitted and covered with defeat and shame. The soul's sense of sin is never so deep and distressful as when we see our own weakness and wilfulness recurring in the lives of our children, and feel that, had we but disciplined ourselves into finer self-control, we might have made the conflict less bitter and the issue less doubtful for them.

The constitution against which this rebellious prince was warring stood for law and order, to be against which was to be against God. This was particularly true under what was held to be a theocratic system of government, that is, a government in which God is recognized as the real ruler, and the earthly king simply as His viceroy. It was a losing venture, on which Absalom staked everything, and if you have familiarized yourself with the incident, you have seen how miserably the whole thing ended up. He had miscalculated the strength of the loyalist party, though possibly, had the counsel of Ahithophel been followed, humanly speaking, there would have been a very different tale to tell. Delay was the one thing that could strengthen David's

position and lessen the chances of Absalom. And when Ahithophel found that his counsel of immediate action was waived in favour of Hushai's counsel of delay, he knew the game was up, so with characteristic sagacity, and an altogether praiseworthy promptitude, he went home and hanged himself. This astute gentleman thus preferred to do for himself what would most assuredly have been done for him, had he waited till David's return.

But the special point I wish to make is that Absalom was for lawlessness and contempt of rightly constituted authority ; for revolution, not reform. He cared not how many lives were sacrificed, nor with how many crimes he might stain his soul, if only he might reach the goal of his desire. His defeat, translated into ethical terms, was the triumph of the established order. It was the vindication of the great law of right against which nothing can successfully contend. When I say that David stood for the great principle of rectitude, you will understand me to mean the ideal David. For, however far short he may have fallen in personal character from the standard of the ideal, yet the ideal remained, and, by remaining, served to measure the depth of his descent. It was then, to this eternal principle that Absalom was opposed—a principle fixed and inflexible, rooting itself in the changeless righteousness of God.

How could Absalom—how could any man be safe in opposition to such a law ? Is the young man safe who carelessly tamps an unexploded dynamite charge ?

Is the young man safe who grasps a naked electric wire, or disputes the track with a locomotive, or fools with strychnine while he eats his food? But the inevitableness of the physical order is only a symbol and shadow of the dead and dread certainty with which the laws of the moral order are administered and enforced. There can be no safety excepting in harmony with the moral law. In line with it you are practically omnipotent. Against it, athwart it, you have not a hope. The moral order is older than the physical, and will outlast it. 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.' 'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished.' Thus, though all material things shall go into dissolution, the moral order shall remain secure and undisturbed. Righteousness and judgement will hold on their eternal course. Unchanging in the midst of change the moral order shall abide.

Now this was the system against which Absalom raised his puny arm of rebellion, and the picture presented to us of his body helplessly dangling in space, presumably by his hair, the symbol of his pride, with no leverage for his feet, and his breast an open target for the darts of Joab, emblems with terrific force the utter hopelessness of the creature in any

contest against law. There is absolutely no foothold for the wrong-doer. It is no use talking a lot of sentimental nonsense. Right is right and wrong is wrong, and in any contest between them right wins out every time. Nothing else matters but righteousness. Nothing else endures. Possessed of this, we may part with everything beside, having no dread of what life or death may bring. We may be little and unknown ; there may seem to be nothing sublime in the round of our daily toil ; we may be persecuted and despised, the objects of ridicule and of scorn ; but what of that ? Yet a little while and we shall have the freedom of the universe, the entrée of the Eternal Father's house, where we shall gather and be crowned with kings and priests and princes of the blood. But if, on the other hand, our conscience and our conduct are at strife, if our business be but a refined system of robbery, if we sweat our employés, oppress the poor and deny the hungry bread, if we cheat our employers by going slow on our job, then it matters not who we are nor what our earthly rank, we are doomed to fall. We play a losing game. There is no escape. We should have to reconstruct the universe with ourselves as its centre to make good our cause. The fiat has gone forth—' Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle and set thy nest among the stars, yet will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.'

Absolutely, then, there is no safety excepting in line with law. Young man, are you safe, or are you in revolt ? If the latter, let me urge you in Christ's

stead, be ye reconciled to God. He has made a way back for you to loyalty and love. David would gladly have given his own life for that of his boy, 'Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' The father submerged the sovereign; but alas! it could not be. What David, however, did not, could not do for Absalom, our King and Father has done for us. In the person of His dear and only Son He has borne our sin and died in our place, so that being justified by faith we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

X

'WHERE ART THOU?'

GEN. iii. 9.

THIS is a question as to moral whereabouts, and it is about the last question the majority care to face or are prepared to answer, for the simple reason that we are accustomed to take stock of everything but ourselves. 'Know thyself' was one of the sayings of the wise men of Greece. It was inscribed over the entrance to Apollo's Delphic temple, and the duty of self-scrutiny and self-assessment was held in as high regard in the school of Socrates as it was in that of Christ. Aristotle divided the sphere of knowledge into three sections—physics, metaphysics, and ethics, and he rightly assigned the chief place to the last. In the abnormal excitement of these tumultuous times, the gaze is more and more being turned outward rather than inward. Our minds are so absorbed by the theatre of war that the happenings on that world-stage exhaust our powers of attention, so that there is little time and perhaps less inclination to pass ourselves under review. Unless, however, this world-tragedy drives us from the study of the outer to that of the inner field, it will have failed in one of its most clearly intentioned results. More than once we have

seen that there is nothing happening out there on the visible plane of history which does not take place in thought, and on a reduced scale, upon the inward and invisible field of the individual heart. The breeding-ground of all this trouble is to be found within the human breast and the human brain, and the very worst of the things that have turned the world sick with horror are possible in the history of the very best. Indeed, some of the gentlest souls have been astounded at the elemental passions of revenge which have leapt from their hearts like tigers from their lair with a primitive thirst for blood. It is only those who do not know themselves who will doubt the swiftness with which the most advanced human nature can slip back into that of the brute. The possibilities of our nature, both upward and downward, when revealed to us, are so startling as to make the heart stand still. Of course a man's capacity for evil in the presence of the most spacious opportunity must be limited by his mental power. We commonplace people are not clever enough to be wicked on the grand scale. You reply : ‘ Let us be thankful.’ Yes, but do not let us reckon it to ourselves for righteousness, because it is what we would do if we could that counts. The cleverer the brain, especially when coupled with the control of numbers and with the power of organization, the mightier must be the capacity for good or ill. Stupidity is never an asset, it is always a liability, whether in the service of God or the devil. It is the brain of the world that the devil is seeking

to ‘ corner ’ and exploit. It is the most brilliant thinkers that he would fain make the creatures of his will. For what is thought to-day is wrought to-morrow, because ideas rule the world. Given a man’s mental ambit, therefore, his moral range will not be far to seek.

Our individual self-knowledge is suffering curtailment from the highly developed social consciousness of the time. We have been drawn together by a common danger, and to the fear of our foes as a motive for closer fellowship must be added the love of our friends and kindred ; for never in our history as a people was the family feeling so strong, never were the bonds of empire so closely drawn, never was the spirit of self-sacrifice so manifest or so wide-spread in its activities, as to-day. That spirit has laid its constraining hands upon thousands who never used to have a thought excepting for their own pleasure, and never did a hand’s turn except to promote their own selfish ends. To-day, however, they are amongst the most splendidly self-forgetting workers for the men at the front or for the wounded who have returned.

Of course we know what can be said by certain critics of the caustic school : that all this is simply a vogue, a fleeting phase of pseudo-sentiment which masquerades as patriotism, and in which the idle rich seek escape from the deadly dullness with which their lives are overcast. It is simply the latest craze, and as long as it succeeds in giving the wished-for thrill, it will be indulged in, as affording a fillip to a jaded

appetite. It was suddenly taken up to meet a craving for sensation, and it will be as promptly dropped when it ceases to produce the stimulation that is sought. Now, that there may be some truth in this cynical summary may be at once conceded. But even so, let it be replied that among those who for the first time, and under the influence of a popular movement, have been led to forgo their erstwhile self-indulgence in order to serve a common cause, there will be thousands for whom the old self-centred life will henceforth have no charm. Having tasted the pure joy of living and working for others, they will never be able to go back to their old-time aimless pursuits.

But the point I wish to make is this : that all this ceaseless and corporate activity which is absorbing heart and brain must not be allowed to obliterate or weaken the sense of our individual self-hood, because it is only as this consciousness is kept clear and strong that thought and action for others can be rendered independent of mere transitory and accidental conditions. It must be lifted out of the realm of mere emotionalism and placed under the rule of great principles, which will hold us steadily to our tasks whether they be popular or unpopular, and whether the times be those of peace or war. In spite, therefore, of so much that tends to divert from the business of self-scrutiny, let us force ourselves to discover our moral whereabouts. To this end we must, in thought at least, frequently disengage ourselves from the

respective groups in which our individuality threatens to be merged. At all costs we must not lose our own personal foothold, for the sense of moral accountability is folded up inextricably with the clear and unblurred vision of our distinct and independent personality. When it comes to the question of moral accountability, every man has to stand on his own feet.

In this realm there are no social or even family circles recognized. They have all to be dissolved into their units to satisfy the inquiry of the text. Each individual, however richly related through family, social, commercial or national connexions, must step out into the open and be dealt with apart. Each has in the last resort to find and keep his own orbit, run his own race, bear his own burdens, foot his own bills and make good in his own private and personal career. The question of the text thus drives us back from all outposts of life and faces us up with life itself, and as we know it in ourselves.

The question of ‘ where,’ whether in a geographical, a mental, or a moral sense, is a relative question. It implies a standard, as East and West imply a standard meridian. The question as put by God to Adam was not topographical, but moral. It meant, How was Adam standing in relation to the Questioner, and it required an answer not in the terms of physical locality but of moral attitude, feeling, purpose and desire. It was put and understood as a question of man’s personal relation to his Maker and Lord. It was

a question of searching inwardness, which pierced like a sword, and effected a three-fold revelation of God to man, of man to God, and of man to himself. The strength of the question lies in the fact that it does not so much judge a man as make him judge himself. It calls upon him to define his own position.

Now thus to get the judicial side of a man's nature to take the side of the law he has violated, gives the lawgiver a tremendous advantage by putting a powerful moral lever in his hands. He holds the standard, and it is like an inspector confronting the builder of a leaning wall with the plumb-line's silent but unanswerable protest. There is absolutely nothing to be said. One cannot argue with a plumb-line. The line uncompromisingly reveals a deviation which, unless corrected, must sooner or later prove the ruin of the wall by an irrevocable law. This law of gravitation has its equivalent in the moral world, where it is known as the law of uprightness, every departure from which means a bid for ruin and defeat. The question of the text means for you and me, How do we stand in relation to this law? And the answer is that the best of us stand condemned and convicted of deviation from the straight and upright life. Merely to reveal a moral deviation, however, without providing for its correction, would be as vexing as it would be vain. But this is absolutely all the law can do. Take the plumb-line again. It has no power to right what it reveals to be wrong. So with the divine law of right to which the conscience of the race responds.

It can only convict of deviation ; it can say, it can do no more.

But this is just where the gospel comes in. The law's extremity is the gospel's opportunity. So that now the nature of the question is changed for us from what it meant to Adam. It becomes a question as to where we are in relation to the offer of salvation. How do we stand in relation to this new and wondrous power, this stream of heavenly tendency ? We are either in it or out of it. God speaks to you and me as though we were the only souls concerned. He desires us to see where we are that we may see where we ought to be. This narrows the whole matter down to a personal issue between the individual soul and God. Wherever you are hiding to-night, there is standing over you the Man who died to redeem you. The confession of Adam led to his expulsion from the earthly paradise into a burnt and barren waste. Your confession will mean your rescue from the wilderness which sin has created, and your admission into an earthly paradise of peace and moral order here, and hereafter into the heavenly paradise of God.

Now, the question put by the text would be of little meaning or value unless a man's moral location and direction were of his own making, and capable of being reviewed and reversed. The whole problem of personal accountability underspreads this question. The implication is that wherever man finds himself to be in relation to God and the moral law, he alone is responsible for his position. He cannot throw the

blame upon heredity or environment or defective education. We are not denying that these things count, and count tremendously in shaping a man's character and career, but they must never be regarded as holding the balance of power in controlling his destiny. That is centred in the will. The will is the supreme factor in character-formation, so much so that it might be called the pivot of destiny. What we will, and only what we will, we are. Nothing that comes into our lives through any other door but that of our full and free consent can come into our moral account. We shall get no credit for goodness that was unintentional, and no blame for evil that we did not deliberately commit. This greatly simplifies the problem of personal accountability, and starts us all at scratch, with nothing to the good or to the bad by reason of our birth. I am not denying the possibility of inherited tendency either in an upward or a downward direction. I am merely claiming that allowance will be made on both sides of the account for everything over which the will has had no control. Every man carries about with him as part of his moral stock-in-trade two inalienable and fundamentally distinguishing characteristics of manhood. First, the perception that certain courses of action are right and that the contrary courses are wrong; and secondly, a deeply-wrought conviction that the right should be followed and that the wrong should be shunned. This essential truth is not affected by the fact that opinions may widely differ as to what is right and what is

wrong. It frequently happens that what is regarded as a clear duty or an unmistakable right by one man is held to be a deadly sin by another. But that is quite beside the point upon which I am here insisting, which is not that of uniformity of opinion as to what is right or wrong, but that the conviction that there is a right and a wrong exists in every breast. There is no man living, and there never has been a man, in whom the distinction was not clearly defined between the things he ought to do and those he ought not.

Derangement, of course, may take place in the moral as well as in the mental realm, whereby the true may be taken for the false and the false for true ; but no derangement ever obliterates the dividing-line between good and evil in the mind, even though it may reverse their positions, putting the evil on the right hand and the good on the left. In such a case, and in the absence of any external standard of common appeal by which the confusion can be corrected, the man's own peace of mind and sense of moral integrity will require him to follow what he feels to be right ; and even though it be hopelessly wrong according to the absolute standard, yet relatively it is not wrong for him ; indeed, being the only right he knows, for him to violate it will be sin. All good or evil runs back and finds its root in the intention, and where the will is set to do what is right, though the wrong be mistaken and substituted for it, the conscience will stand clear. Now it is this possible derangement of the inward standard that necessitates its being supplemented by an out-

ward one, to which it may be brought either for confirmation or correction as the case may be; and the remarkable thing is the unerring recognition of its master by the moral consciousness of man. Paul speaks about the law that is written in men's hearts, and the inner and the outer writings correspond. They are antiphonal, they answer to one another. It is this inner revelation that really accredits the outer to our minds.

This constitutes the ground of God's confidence in making His appeal to men. He knows what He has wrought into the moral structure of our constitution, and just as He formed the eye to confront it with light, just as He moulded the ear with a view to vibrations of sound, so He has deeply inlaid within every human breast that moral consciousness in which the sanctions of law find their unmistakable echo, and the voices of duty awaken loyal response. Thus the external law finds its internal endorsement, otherwise its appeal would be vain. It would be like the light falling on sightless eyes. All nature's marvellous revelations of colour and form would in such a case be but a sealed book, because they demand for their appreciation the perceiving sense, and behind the perceiving sense the interpreting brain. The world of ordered beauty and harmony around us presupposes an inner world of the mind to which it can appeal, a world of ideas which answers to it, and in which its laws and principles find their reflex and ideal counterpart. In like manner the moral order as it stands expressed in the revealed

Word of God discovers its best credential within the human breast. This is what Coleridge meant when he declared that he knew the Bible to be the ‘ Word of God,’ because said he, ‘ It finds me.’ But a greater than Coleridge had long before declared ‘ By manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.’ That is to say, there is according to Paul an inward sense of right and wrong possessed by every man, to which the preacher of righteousness can confidently appeal ; knowing that his claim will be admitted, even though the admission means the soul’s own condemnation of itself. This, I repeat, constitutes the ground of the Divine confidence in making His demands. He knows what is in man.

Now, as we have indicated, this inner standard is capable of being tampered with : whether this means that the deterioration takes place in the conscience itself, or in the faculty by which we interpret its readings, need not now be discussed, for the result is the same. Hence the necessity for the outward and incorruptible standard as administered by the ever-living, ever-loving Spirit of God. Though the inner word of God may be corrupted and made to speak with dubious utterance, or even fail to speak at all, the outward and visible Word abides. A man’s watch may through carelessness or the want of cleaning fail in accuracy or altogether stop. But though all the watches and clocks in the community should go wrong, the sun, moon, and stars would remain as

unfailing standards which can never be corrupted, and by these we could determine unerringly the time of day. What the sun is to your watch, revelation is to your conscience. I do not therefore ask you where you are according to your conscience, but where are you according to this Book? ‘For the word that I speak unto you,’ said Christ, ‘the same shall judge every man at the last day.’

XI

WILL MINUS DESIRE

Now is the accepted time.—2 COR. vi. 2.

THE words translated 'accepted time' are strikingly suggestive. They stand for the meeting-point of opportunity and desire, and thus have a subjective and an objective significance. The mental picture which they would suggest to a Greek mind would be that of a host waiting on the threshold of his open door to receive an honoured and expected guest. As ~~Paul~~ employs the phrase, it is to convey the idea of hospitality extended toward a great moral opportunity, which knocks at the door of every man's life, creating a crisis in which vast issues are to be determined and irrevocable decisions made. The tides of inward desire and determination have their ebb and flow, just as do the tides of outward opportunity. When these two tides both reach their flood at one and the same time, everything in the way of moral achievement or spiritual eventuation becomes possible to the human soul in whom they meet. The tragedy is when they do not coincide, when either desire finds no encouraging response in circumstance, or the call of circumstance finds no answering feeling of desire. ~~Of what avail is it that the most splendid material~~

~~or moral offer should present itself, if the desire or ability to embrace it be dead!~~ It is ^{the} ~~this~~ ebb-tide of desire that is so fatal, and gives such cause for alarm. Once this torpidity of disposition smites the soul, it is as though the will were drugged. There sets in an overpowering tendency to let things slide, and allow the logic of events to determine for us what we have not the moral energy to determine for ourselves. Such a disposition, unless struggled against and overcome, is the sure precursor of doom, whether in the moral or commercial world. When a man has reached the depths at which he says and means 'I don't care,' there is, humanly speaking, only one way up and out, and that is through sheer and cold-blooded determination. In such a case the man's will must come to the rescue. In the absence of all feeling, and just on the cold facts, as they are perceived and admitted by the judgement, let him act. Because right is right, to follow right, even though no faintest flicker can be detected in the pulse of desire, becomes the highest wisdom and the only way of life. Here is the true philosophy of the situation : when right feeling becomes too feeble to prompt right action, then right action must be encouraged to revive right feeling.

[An illustration of the ^{law} ~~principle for which we are contending~~ may be seen in the methods we adopt for resuscitating those who have been rescued from drowning. Animation is suspended, and unless something is done, and done quickly, to induce breathing, life will speedily become extinct. Hence artificial means

have to be resorted to. As the initiative cannot be taken by the unconscious person himself from within, it has to be taken by some one else from without. When the lungs refuse to act upon the outside air, the outside air must be made to act on them, in the hope that thus encouraged they may start again and keep up the running they had dropped. So when desire dies down in relation to duty, the will must come to the rescue and induce its resuscitation. This doing of one's duty with dogged determination, long after the desire for it or the delight in it has gone out, is perhaps the one and only way to kindle it anew. Fortunately the offer of salvation does not turn upon our good desires but on our moral determination.

But some one may say, 'Are we likely to determine what we do not desire?' Certainly—we do it every day. Desire and determination are as often as not in different camps. ~~How many of you get up as early on Sunday as you do on Monday? Very few, I reckon. But why? Because desire rules, and you stay in bed. But desire to stay in bed is just as strong Mondays as Sundays, yet you do not yield to it. Determination to get up, not only in the absence of desire, but in direct opposition to a contrary tendency, ejects you from bed at the appointed time. As a~~ *we are constantly* ~~matter of fact, we make ourselves do a score of things every day which we not only do not desire, but which are positively distasteful to us. Because we know we ought to do them, our strength of determination puts them through. Instead of the moral value of~~

such actions being reduced, it is immeasurably enhanced. It is the soul's selection of the line of greatest resistance, and calls out all that is morally noblest and best. The word translated 'accepted' is a very strong term in the original, and by using it the Apostle seeks to set forth that the tide of spiritual opportunity is at the flood. We may have our ebb-tide of holy desires, but the tide of God's loving, welcoming, hospitable grace knows no ebb. ~~You~~ have ~~never~~ to wait for a more favourable opportunity. So far as outward conditions are concerned, the moment is always ready for the man. The trouble in spiritual affairs is never with the moment, it is always with the man. The offer of salvation is in the present tense. ~~This greatly simplifies the transaction. There are no complications of 'options' or 'futures.'~~ Here and now, this invisible tide of spiritual opportunity is at ~~your~~ very feet; all ~~you~~ have to do is just to take the current as it serves, and it will do the rest. Will you? Never mind about your feelings. Will you consent to do the thing you know to be right? I push past all your emotions, dead, dormant or alive, and make my appeal to your sense of honour, to your knowledge of what is due from you to God. You owe Him yourself. He is your greatest creditor. Suppose you had to call a meeting of your creditors to-morrow, and could not pay 20s. in the £: suppose further that among your creditors was the Government of the State, you would find that its officers need not accept compromise, for the Crown is a preferential

creditor and has first claim though every one else should have to go short. Of course it might not press its claim, but that is its right. Now you and I and all men are before God morally bankrupt. We are in moral deficit all round. But God is a preferential creditor. He has the first claim on our estates, and He puts in His claim insisting on its full discharge. Not, however, that others may go short, but that through settlement of His, we may be placed in moral credit to meet in full the claims of others.

Now the problem with which I am faced every Sunday is this, how, in the presence of absolutely dead desire, to win a verdict for Jesus Christ and His salvation. There is nothing else for it but for me to confront your will. Of course it would be easier if I could approach you all on the flood-tide of your good desires, but it is with the ebb-tide I am forced to deal. There are men and women everywhere who once wished strenuously in the right direction. The current of their desire set that way, but the will stood out and refused compliance. And now, in the place where desire once glowed with living flame, there is ^{nothing} ~~nought~~ but a handful of ashes cold and grey. You are wishing, it may be, that you *could* wish, and that some voice could speak across the grave of your dead desire and bid it rise into newness of life. ~~Now it is with you that I plead.~~ Even though you are cold and unresponsive to the Gospel message, though it seems to find no answering echo in your hearts as in the olden times, though doubts about many things cloud

your minds, there are two primary outstanding and indisputable facts, God and your own soul, the will of the universe and your will. That will of God is set on you. To reach you it has taken to itself human hands and human feet, a human heart and a human brain, human eyes and human lips, and spoken to you in the dear words of human speech. Let your will close with that will ~~here and now~~, and though you ~~started to read these words~~ in a cold and indifferent and it may be flippant mood, you will finish fired with the rapture of the sons of God.

XII

DESIRE MINUS WILL

Herod feared John . . . and when he heard him, he did many things (R.V. was much perplexed) and heard him gladly.—
MARK vi. 20.

IN our last study we were dealing with a moral condition in which good desire had ceased to prompt. We faced the problem of the hundreds who, though attendants at church, and listening to the most heart-searching appeals, remain unmoved, in whom the disposition to respond seems dead. Instead however of concluding this to be a hopeless condition, as at first sight it might appear, we found that where good desire had thus declined the will might yet be relied upon to come to the rescue and take up the running. While it is perpetually true that the history of normal action is first of all desire for an object and then the appropriate act of will for its attainment, yet this order, as we have seen, can be reversed, and in the absence of all disposition, indeed, even in the very teeth of positive indisposition, the will may take the initiative, and by reaching forward to the object set up a reflex action, which, working backward, will result in resuscitating desire. We illustrated this by showing how in the case of rendering first aid to the drowning, where the

lungs have ceased to act on the air, the air can be made to act on the lungs and artificial respiration induced with restorative results. Since pointing this out I have come across a singular confirmation of this theory in a new work on Psychology by Bampfylde Fuller. After showing the relation between our impulses and our conduct, the author says: 'We can influence our feelings by the expression of our features; we can conjure up cheerfulness by smiles, and gloom by frowns.' Thus, then, the balance of power resides with the will and not with the emotion, so that what we will, we may become. In this study, however, I wish to deal with the contrary case of those whose emotions are frequently stirred, and whose good desires flash into flame, but, because they never engage the will, not only leave the subjects of them morally uncommitted but positively lower in the moral scale. The danger in such cases is lest a condition of religious desire should come to be regarded as the equivalent of religious character, and thus, through inducing a false sense of security, permit the offer of salvation to go by default. The fact is, until our emotions are taken up by the will and translated into their appropriate expression, until they are so acted on by the mental and moral forces as to become crystallized in some corresponding act and fact, they are of neither practical nor ethical worth. You will sometimes hear it said of a person who shows deep sympathy in the presence of calamity, or a keen sense of outrage at the relation of some grievous wrong, that his sentiment does him credit.

But does it? If what we have said be correct, then, before this fine sentiment can be placed to moral credit, it has so to set the will in motion that an intention is formed to alleviate the distress or redress the wrong. Here lies the peril of all appeals to the emotional nature. It is a course of action which affects the mind, as alcohol affects the body. It is an artificial stimulant, always requiring the dose to be increased in order to produce the desired effect. There are 'tipplers' in the matter of emotionalism, just as there are tipplers in whisky. They are never happy except they are in a simmer of sensation, which they seek to induce either by indulgences in the ~~lunatic~~ literature which under the plea of realism is as false to art as it is offensive to decency, or, what is worse, by indulging in the perilous pastime of creating for themselves exciting and morally dangerous situations in which they skirt the very brink of the abyss. But the religious emotions are exposed to exploitation and over-stimulation in a no less perilous manner, and with no less disastrous results. There is a class of ~~pseudo-pietists~~ who feed up their feelings on sensation after sensation, till they come to mistake the hysteria in which these excesses result for religious experience, instead of recognizing it as a morbid condition dangerous alike to heart and brain. Not quite so bad as these, but equally futile from a moral and religious point of view, is the case of those who, under the spell of old association, or touched into tenderness by some familiar tune, imagine that, because forsooth they are

hushed into momentary reverence, or melted by a gracious memory into tears, they must necessarily be in a state of grace, when as a matter of fact they are simply creatures of sentiment, the proof of which will be seen in the fact, that for all their emotionalism, they show nothing lofty or pure or self-sacrificing in the daily walk of life and work. All such emotionalism is of no necessary moral value or significance, and the only way to give it such is to take it up into thought and purpose, where it can be disciplined into control, and directed to specific moral ends. Herod, whose case is before us, is an illustration of emotionalism minus morality. Like many moderns of both sexes, Herod had good impulses. There was that within him which responded to the teaching of the Baptist. 'He heard him gladly.' The preceding word in the Greek text from which the A.V. was made, means 'he did many things'; that in the text followed by the Revisers means 'he was much perplexed.' In either case it is implied that he did not do the one right thing. He was a creature of impulse at the mercy of his emotion, because there was no strong and definite purpose giving unity to his life. What with John the Baptist and conscience on the one hand, and Herodias and his guilty intrigue with her on the other, he was torn in twain. Had he but put his will into the scale of his good emotions, or, as we have previously put it, taken his good desires up into his will and rendered them vertebrate with a strong and virile purpose, he might

have redeemed the name of Herod from the treachery and violence, the lawlessness and lust, that had always been associated with the princes of the Idumean line. But alas! all his fine emotions were consumed in the fires of a coarse and vulgar sensuality, so that he, who had begun by hearing John gladly, finished up by cutting off his head! So to-day men listen to the truth on Sunday evenings and are stirred by noble impulses, but because they do not crystallize these fine feelings into some definite and morally committing act, they go out again on Monday to ~~work anew their deeds of fraud and shame~~. To the very worst of men come the very best of moments, but because the moment merely comes to the man without the man coming to the moment, nothing in the way of a great purpose is born. When Paul said 'By manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,' he meant that in the most degraded there was something that recognized and acknowledged as authoritative the moral challenge of goodness, wherever and whenever that goodness was presented or announced. This it is that distinguishes moral excellence from every other kind. If I go to see a great work of art in which the painter or sculptor has expressed his uttermost sense of beauty in colour or form, the presentation does not convict me of sin nor smite me with shame. I rejoice in its perfection. I am awed, it may be, into admiring wonder at the mind that thought, and the hand that wrought this marvel on canvas or in stone. But while it challenges

my admiration, it does not cast me in moral guilt, nor send me away to weep in secret abashed and self-condemned, for the simple reason that such artistic excellence is no challenge to me. I am under no compulsion even to try, much less achieve. But it is quite otherwise, and always otherwise, with the beauty of moral character. It challenges not only our sense of beauty but our sense of duty. In the presence of the Supreme Personality, the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, we become conscious of some strange compelling power bidding us not merely admire but emulate, or else stand for ever self-condemned. We know it is not sufficient in such a case to feel; we are called upon to do. We answer to the pull of this moral attraction, just as truly as steel answers to the pull of a magnet. You may wrap a needle round with fold after fold of enveloping and separating media, you may even lose it in the very heart of a bale of wool, but only let it be brought into the vicinity of an electro-magnet, and the power of this mysterious attraction will pass by and through all obstructions, laying its invisible spell upon that tiny magnetic affinity and drawing the needle up to itself. Even so, though the human soul may have become so enmeshed in flesh and fleshly pursuits as humanly speaking to be lost, yet the moral magnetism of the universe as it stands expressed in the uplifted Christ will discover that hidden affinity and draw it upward to Himself. 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth,' said Christ, 'will draw all men unto Me'; and for us to be

conscious of that magnetic pull and not respond to it is to live under the lash of perpetual self-rebuke. But to feel and answer and yield to its attraction is to pass from the reign and region of death and to thrill through all the pulses of our being with new and wondrous life.

XIII

RISING MARKETS AND DIMINISHING MEANS

Buying up the opportunity.—EPH. v. 16.

LIFE is your market-place. It is crowded with opportunities which offer at prices proportioned to the value. Beside the things of solid and enduring worth, there are the usual displays of tinsel and glitter that bid for your patronage and purchase, only to disappoint and betray. The purchase-money in this market is time. Each individual starts business with an unknown amount of this capital to his credit. It is a momentarily diminishing quantity. There is no hoarding of his wealth possible. As fast as we get we must spend. Sleeping or waking, our credit balance is being steadily reduced, and happy are we if, with the perishable currency of time, we have succeeded in making the imperishable possessions of eternity our own.

Apart, however, altogether from other-world considerations, success in this world depends upon the judicious investment of our time. It can be so put out as to yield the richest returns, or it can be fooled away in frivolous and unproductive purchases, in the same way as money can be wasted by spendthrift

fools in the markets of the world. Unlike the loss of money, however, the loss of time can never be recouped. We can never retrieve our wasted moments, nor recover the golden hours that we have sacrificed to folly. Neither can any penitence avail to recall and rehabilitate our abused and slighted years. The irony of the situation springs from the fact that as our capital diminishes the market goes up. The less we have, the more is demanded. The longer we delay our purchase, the higher the prices that rule. The things that we could easily have made our own by the spending of a few hours a week when we were young—say the mastery of a musical instrument, the acquisition of a foreign language, proficiency in shorthand, or skill in one or other of the sciences—any one of which we could have commanded at a trifling cost of self-denial, are now hopelessly beyond our reach. For not only has our time diminished in quantity, but in quality; that is, its purchasing power has decreased. What would have cost us but a month of sunny and receptive youth to acquire, would demand a year of middle age. Memory is not so retentive, enthusiasm is not so keen; and even if we were equal to the strain it is questionable whether we should find it worth the struggle. For what would have been an inestimable possession if acquired in youth, and at a nominal cost, may be far and away too expensive a luxury for which to spend our later years.

Our wisdom to-day is to purchase such opportunities as our now limited means can place within our power.

There is the greatest danger lest we should make bad worse, by dwelling longer on our mistakes than is absolutely necessary to win out of them an incentive to future vigilance. The failures of the past must not be allowed so to project themselves into the present as to depress the mind. Unless we throw the devil of despair, he will throw us. The trouble with the past is that it will not readily consent to be past. It insists on being present as well, and the more shameful it has been the more persistent is its refusal to get behind our back. A bad past has thus, in proportion to its success in thrusting itself into the present, a fatal power of drugging the will, thereby reducing the purchasing power of the immediate moment and the working efficiency of life. However bad the past may have been, turn your back on it and defy it to molest you. By an act of your will, and in the ever-present strength of the Highest, you can cut yourself clear from the clinging restraints with which past courses of conduct would tie you up, and stand free to face the future with a new and buoyant hope. Like Paul, 'forgetting the things that are behind,' live with all the force of your being in the present moment, and extract from it every penny of its purchasing power to buy up the opportunities that yet remain.

To you who are just entering the market, and before whom all its wares are spread, let it be said that time is your currency. If you are to make the most of life's offers, you must not squander your capital on things that dazzle the eye only that they may entangle

the feet. The finest things in life's market offer at the entrance. All things are possible of purchase while you are young. Sensibility is keen, the brain receptive, imagination vivid, the step firm, the hand flexible, capable, and easily trained ; while, above all, hope is an ascending star. The whole world is before you from which to pick and choose. Especially is this the case in lands like our own, where there is no system of caste which binds a man down to the situation and circumstance of his birth, but where the very heights in social, commercial, political or professional life are accessible to every one from whatever level he may commence the ascent. No matter what your difficulties may be, you may cut your way to the front and stand side by side with the best. It is all a matter of exchange, and if you will but pay the price—if, instead of wasting your precious hours in purposeless pursuits, you will put in your nights at home-study or a School of Mines' course, and thus qualify yourselves for future usefulness, there is literally nothing that you may not do or dare. If you will but resolve to be and do something in this world, God will help you, and no man will venture to limit your achievements.

Of course you hardly need to be told that mere time will not do this. It is the quality and quantity of purpose with which you charge the passing moments that will secure these splendid returns, and put the harvest of the future in your hands. It resolves itself ultimately into a question of will-power. What you will, you may. All tools for work and all weapons for war lie

ready to the hand of the man who dares to say 'I will.' 'Not as fools' then, but as wise, part up with time only for an ample equivalent. Demand a *quid pro quo* for every moment you spend. You see from the context that Paul does not hesitate to call things by their right names. He bluntly calls men 'fools' who miss their chances and fling away their time.

One of the most important questions, is 'How do you spend your leisure?' One need not ask how you spend your working hours. Presumably you put in a fair day's work for a fair day's wage,—though this ought to be said, that the policy that is for ever seeking to reduce the hours of work while it increases the rate of pay is not the kind of practice that has made the masters of craft and the leaders of men. Your experts in every department have been men who have put in unstinted work. There is the greatest danger lest the inestimable boon of an eight hours' day should result in levelling down the workers to a dull and drab mediocrity, with the result that although we have brains enough and muscle enough to hold our own against the world, whether in the examination-room or in the field of applied mechanics, we shall be compelled to seek for our future specialists from beyond the seas. One of the effects of too much leisure has been to shift the centre of gravity from the workshop to the playground, and to make the whole of life revolve around a mere game. Now anything that reduces the seriousness of life, that cuts the sinews of honest effort, that discourages a man from making the very

most of his powers, or that damps his ambition to excel in his craft, is a sin against the great law of evolution by which alone faculty can be specialized and raised to its highest power. If we are to hold our pride of place and not to be ousted by the foreigner from the markets of the world, we must take our work more seriously. Opportunities will not dangle indefinitely before the eye of the indolent and vacillating. This would demoralize business by giving a premium to sloth. It would not only be unfair to the diligent, but re-act with moral and physical disaster on the lazy man himself.

Get it fixed once and for all in your minds that life will be what you choose to make it. How you conceive and construe it must necessarily react on the use to which you put it. Hold it cheap, and you will run it to waste, or what is worse, to wickedness. Think of it nobly, and you will live it well. Cultivate the sense of life's high sanctity, for only thus will you avoid all practices that would make it common or unclean. All the springs of action are found rising in the mountains of thought. In the discipline of the mind lies the whole secret of a well-balanced and rightly-ordered life.

Now, we all have what we call our better moments—moments of moral clairvoyance. But the trouble is that they are not of sufficient duration to effect any permanent influence on conduct. They belong rather to the realm of emotion than of thought. Character consists, however, not in our spasms of good desire,

which visit the worst of us at times, and produce a momentary revulsion from evil, but in the steady and clearly defined purposes which we firmly hold and resolutely pursue. The trouble with too many lives is that there is no main current of thought and intention that can be dignified by the name of purpose, no dominating principle draining the whole continent of the mind into one channel, thus making it effective as a working force. This absence of force through dissipation renders impossible anything in the way of direction. You can do more with a life that is moving strongly in a wrong direction than with one that is simply adrift. The great ocean liners that come into our harbours often find their steering gear absolutely useless for the purpose of getting alongside, for the simple reason that they cannot safely get up enough speed to bring it into full requisition. It is clear that unless a vessel has a certain amount of 'way' on, the helm is powerless to direct, but the limited sea-room provided in many ports precludes the possibility of safely getting up the necessary speed, the result being that these mighty creatures that can cleave the deep at thirty knots an hour are often when in harbour almost as helpless as hulks, and have to be towed in by tugs. So too, in the matter of human career, there are two main requirements to success. First there must be force, dynamic, driving power; and secondly the power of direction and concentration to a given end. The generating-chamber of each of these two forces is the mind. This is the seat of both the initiative and

the executive functions. It is in the region of one's mind, therefore, that any new order of life and conduct, that is to be permanent, must take its rise. Peter saw and said this in his first letter, chap. i., ver. 13, with great clearness and force: 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Here the idea, of course, is that of an Oriental robe, loose, flowing and floating about, to the gathering of dust and the impeding of movement. Just as the wearer, then, who wished to have free course, required to tuck up tightly the folds of his robe beneath his girdle, so, in the mental and moral world, the man who would have the full and unimpeded use of his mind must gather in his wandering thoughts and vagrant affections lest they entangle him in illicit relations, which will use up all his efforts to repudiate and resist, leaving him no force for the positive work of life.

'Be sober' may be interpreted as the direct opposite of dissipation, and this, construed in its mental and moral sense, as we are compelled to do in order to make it co-ordinate with the entire thought of the passage, means, 'Acquire the power of concentration instead of allowing thought to ramble away along lines of least mental and moral resistance. We must have the mind so under control that at a moment's notice the full force of it can be turned on to the matter in hand. This stored mental and moral energy then becomes available, not only for utilizing present opportunity, but, by projecting and directing hope into the future,

draws on the inspiration of to-morrow to reinforce the drooping purpose of to-day. This is the meaning of the phrase, 'Hope to the end for the grace that is being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Peter's whole contention is for the acquisition of this two-fold force, this driving and directing power. It greatly simplifies the business of living when all the forces of mind and body are under the control of the will. This unifies life. But when the worlds of thought and behaviour are subject to the emotions and passions, instead of being ruled by a purpose that is wise and strong, there is dissipation of energy with a corresponding reduction of life's working efficiency. Here lies the necessity for self-discipline in the region of thought. No man can ever make the best of himself who cannot command all the forces of his life. Quite a utilitarian argument, therefore, here emerges against the formation of evil habit, for every power that is allowed to get out of hand, where all the powers are yoked up, and have to work together, disorganizes the team. It is clear that the more time and attention a man has to give to the regulation of a single unruly desire, which he has failed to discipline, the less he has for the main business of life.

I came across the following economic law the other day which is alleged to be universally recognized in the higher circles of commerce and industrial life, 'A given piece of work should be done by the lowest unit capable of performing it, and each unit should be utilized for the highest work it is able to perform.'

Now, this is a generally admitted working principle in the world of industry, and its common sense and reasonableness must appeal to every fair-minded man. But what about the alleged disposition on the part of present-day working men to limit their exertions and not to do their best? It is a complaint of employers all round that we are confronted with the anomaly of heightened wages, co-existing with lowered efficiency on the part of the workmen, and a consequent diminution in the quantity and quality of output in the way of work. One employer tells me that twelve men are now required to accomplish what used to be done comfortably by eight ! Now, it does not lie within the compass of this study to deal at length with this condition of things. I am only employing it for the sake of illustrating the principle which I desire to enforce. But this must be said, that in proportion as such a spirit becomes prevalent among the workers in any community, there must result not only economic loss, but what is infinitely more serious, moral deterioration and decay, for when the making of money means the unmaking of men, the end is well in sight.

But there is another and higher plane upon which this whole question requires to be discussed, and which was in Paul's mind when he wrote. The day may be regarded as God's market, crowded with opportunities for getting and doing good. These offer at fixed prices, and it is purely a question of exchange of what we have for what we want. Here is a market in which we do business for eternity, and make purchases

which are a permanent possession. When we go into the world's market and make the most solid material purchase, we can get no permanent tenure of it, for the time will come when it will go from us, or we will go from it, which amounts to the same thing. But when we step into God's market, and buy up a vacant opportunity and charge it with the germs of a kind thought or loving deed or helpful word, we have acquired an imperishable asset—we have laid up a possession in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where no thief can break through and steal.

XIV

THE MAN AND THE MOMENT

Be instant, in season, out of season.—2 TIM. iv. 2.

THE young fellow to whom these words were written had just buckled on his armour for the battle. Life stretched out before him an untried venture, an untrodden track. It was a challenge with unguessed issues. What it held for him would depend largely on himself, and the sooner he could be got to feel it the better. It was a great thing for a young man at such a critical period to receive such a letter from so notable a man as Paul, whose name and fame were already ringing from East to West throughout the world.

The text is a call to attention. It literally means ‘Be on it.’ It is to stand in to a thing with all one’s powers converged to the point of achievement. It means to be gathered for a spring, to be poised for a leap. It is the attitude of the runner toeing the line and crouched for the start, quivering in every nerve, with every muscle strung, waiting for the fall of the flag.

The text has been rendered by Dr. Way : ‘Be ready for action, whether the opportunity be favourable or unfavourable.’ And this coupling of attention with

readiness to grasp occasion by the hand shows Paul to have been a man of affairs, who understood the secret of a successful career. He himself was the living embodiment and exemplar of concentrativeness. It may be doubted whether there ever was a man more capable of becoming wholly absorbed in his work, to the exclusion of every other interest, than this great Apostle. Allowing that something must be credited to temperament, and not all to acquirement, yet a man who could sit in a Roman dungeon, chained by the arm to a Roman guard, and, with the shadow of impending execution deepening round him, write such a letter as this, so full of wise counsel, and so keenly alive to the perils of the young novitiate, must have had a fine power of mental detachment from self and of devotion to his work. This has always been the outstanding characteristic of the men who have made out anything in history. Whether in science or art, in literature or commerce, in peace or in war, in statecraft or in religion, it has ever been the man who, like Paul, has been able to say. 'This one thing I do'—not 'I dream,' but 'I do'—who has carved out the facts of history and carried forward the destinies of the world.

It is this quality of being 'on it' with every power let out to its last limit—this faculty of seizing the moment and extracting from it its uttermost worth, that marks your top-quality man. This is the man for whom every one is waiting. He is his own credential. He requires no letters of recommendation, no wire-

pulling politicians to secure an appointment. He need not even seek it. It seeks him. Doors fly open to this man on all hands. He has his choice. All kinds of forces bend their willing necks to his service. Tools and weapons leap to his hand. I will tell you why so many of you are ineffective, and why you see others with less ability beat you in the game of life. You are not 'on it.' The office, the warehouse, the counter, the bench, do not get your undivided attention ; and as long as the main problem of your life is how to gain the maximum wage for the minimum work, you will have to be content to see the coveted prizes and positions of life secured by others. Not, let it be remembered, because they have more ability, but—and this is the mortifying reflection to the man who fails—because with only your aptitude, but with every ounce of their force pressed into service, they outstrip you in the race of life.

It is not so much a question of opportunity as of grasp. It is what a man brings to opportunity in the way of grip and grit that counts. This is the force in our text of the phrase, 'In season—out of season.' The Apostle is simply saying to Timothy, 'Look ! it is not the matter of in season or out of season, of favourable opportunity or unfavourable, that is of concern. This is of quite secondary importance. What is of supreme moment is that you yourself be always awake, alert, "in form," on the spot, and ready at a moment's notice to spring when occasion calls.' The seasons we cannot control, but ourselves we can.

We require to have ourselves so in hand, to have such command of our powers, that we can deliver all our force at a moment's notice at a given point.

Now in these days when there is so much talk about equalizing opportunity, it will be well to gain Paul's point of view, because it will save us from fatal confusion of thought. What is meant by providing equal opportunity? If you look into it, you will see that you cannot equalize opportunity unless you can equalize men. Opportunity consists of two hemispheres, one of which lies in the open door, the other in the person who stands before it. Either without the other is useless. Given the opening and the ability to enter, you have the opportunity. But it is precisely this ability to enter that in so many cases is wanting, thus rendering the opening abortive, and the so-called opportunity vain. The difficulty lies in the men more than in the moment, and any one who starts out to equalize men, either physically, mentally, or morally, will be up against what Americans call 'a rather steep proposition.' Until this can be achieved, however, it is the idlest of all political clap-trap to talk of equality of opportunity. Look at it from a physical point of view. In the city where these lines are being written, there were recently vacancies in the constabulary for about thirty men. There were doubtless ten times that number willing to enter those thirty doors. But there is a minimum height-limit of five feet ten inches. The writer endeavoured with such influence as he

could command to get a young immigrant into the force who was slightly under the minimum. He had every other qualification but height, and he was rightly rejected, for, as the superintendent pointed out, if the standard were lowered an inch to meet the man, instead of requiring the men to come up to the standard, you might go on reducing until the force was full of weeds. This is precisely how equality of opportunity would work out if some people had their way, till all standards, physical, intellectual, and moral, were obliterated, and the prizes of life were shared by worthy and unworthy alike. It is worth while asking ourselves where such a shallowing process will land or rather strand us, before it is too late to call a halt.

This teaching of the Apostle casts the onus of success or failure on personal character, and not on impersonal circumstance. Of course Paul was speaking mainly of opportunity in the spiritual realm. He desired his young confrère to be as keen in the moral market as are business men in the markets of wheat or wool, watching for the main chance with every sense awake and every power on stretch.

If you want an illustration of being 'instant' from a business point of view, attend the Australian wool sales during the season. It is the chance of the year, and buyers from England, America, France, and Germany are on the job. For weeks before the sale the wool has been on view, and catalogue in hand, the would-be buyers have gone through bale after

bale, comparing each lot with its catalogued number and marking it in the margin, so that when offered it will be readily recognized. On the day of the sale they muster, sitting round the sale-room with keen and eager look, and every power sharpened to a needle's point. They are like leopards crouching for the spring. With hats and coats off and vests apart they watch their chances. Like hounds on the leash they leap forward literally barking out their bids. They are 'instant in season,' for if they miss their chance it has gone for a year. This is the all-sufficient justification for all this stress and strain and struggle to make the opportunity their own, and should they succeed in securing the lots for which they bid, they feel amply repaid for all the time and labour spent in their pursuit. But if you could see these buyers when the season is over, you would find them no less keen and alert. They are for the most part highly-salaried men, whose business it is to keep in touch with all markets of the world in season and out of season. They are always at their employer's call, to be sent anywhere in the world where opportunity may offer to make a successful deal. Certainly they do not in their times of recess pursue occupations that would mar their tactical sense, or in any way render them less fit for the finest discrimination when the occasion calls. Here, then, is a lesson for the buyer who would do business in the market of spiritual opportunity. Most of us can gather ourselves together for special

seasons. But to have our eye open for unexpected chances between seasons, so that no favourable opportunity may slip by ungrasped or unimproved,—this requires us to be always ‘in form,’ with an un-sleeping watchfulness. There are ‘seasons’ and there are ‘between-times’ in God’s great market. It is the between-times that test us. We are so apt to relax effort and let things slide, with the result that when the season does come we are not geared up for the call that the occasion makes upon our powers.

Paul would have Timothy always ready at a moment’s notice to spring at the word of command. It is this fine soldierly alertness, this sense of always being ‘on duty,’ that the text enjoins.

Let the Church be as eager to purchase chances of winning souls as the world is to gain the prizes of the market-place and the exchange, and we shall have little trouble with doubts as to the reality and genuineness of the Christian faith. When men see that we are so intensely earnest about their salvation that, like buyers of wheat and wool, we leap into the market and bid against the Devil’s agents for the souls of our fellow creatures, they will take knowledge of us that we have not only been with Jesus, but that we have drunk of the cup of which He drank, and have been baptized with the baptism wherewith He was baptized.

XV

THE FORBIDDEN LOVE

I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked One. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,—is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—I JOHN ii. 14-17.

THIS is a message from an old man to those on the threshold of life, before whom stretched the untrodden future, bright with hope—a future filled with friendly challenges and thronged with beckoning hands. It is a voice from the first century to the twentieth—a message from a man of overflowing sympathy with all the hopes and prospects, the potencies and perils, of opening life. Standing at the end of a long and successful career, and knowing from experience the difference between the essential and the accidental, the abiding and the transient, the pearl and the shell, between the things that matter and the things that don't, he speaks out of a full heart and a richly-stored mind to the young manhood, not only of that, but of this and of every age. This is no pessimist wailing

out his misery after a long life of disappointment, embittered by misfortune and disgusted with the world. Nay ; it is the cheery optimist speaking great words of comfort out of the sunset of a life made glorious and full of hope through absorption into Him who is the ' Life indeed.'

Tradition teaches that John lived to over a hundred years, so that physically he must have started life splendidly endowed with vital force. Born and bred to a fisherman's life, he was probably of fine physique, full of energy and wholehearted enthusiasm, with little tolerance for timid, tepid, and irresolute souls. It was all or nothing with John. His was a spirit that burned and blazed at white heat. Not less impulsive, perhaps, than Peter, but more reliable, he had, however, the defects of his qualities ; he was too intense to be tolerant, and would have burned up at a moment's notice every one who did not straight away hand in allegiance to his Lord. Following his craft in all weathers, he would have developed a fine type of robust manhood, so that this is no pale-browed or melancholy dyspeptic that talks to us in these letters. These are not the academic meditations of some sheltered recluse who never knew the rough-and-tumble of contact and conflict with the world of men and things, but an all-round manly man, with all a strong man's sympathies with opening life in the pride and glory of its strength.

From what he writes he would seem to imply that the young fellows to whom he refers had put up a

successful fight against their fleshly foes, and 'turned them down.' This had appealed to him; for his own early strength had been yoked and harnessed by the Master's own hands. Disposed to be rough and untameable, it had been disciplined into gentleness and control, so that the younger Son of Thunder had become the Apostle of tenderness and love. This rare blend of gentleness and strength is the last expression of Christian culture, its uttermost flower and crown, which years of training and experience alone can produce.

Here, then, was this rare product of Christian discipleship, this graduate from the school of Jesus, speaking out of the calm of finely-tempered character, acquired from well-nigh a century of schooling in the art of self-control. He sees the magnificent strength of those to whom he wrote, with all its possibilities of service, as well as the temptations to which it exposed its possessors; for a man's point of power is ever his point of peril. You can never tell what he is as to his essential character until you clothe him with power and give him a free hand. His sphere of power puts him on trial and becomes his judge. When he has unrestricted movement, you discover the sweep of the main current in the matter of his desires. The ruling passion displays itself when he is disencumbered of all regulation and convention. The personal character of the soldier cannot be deduced from his behaviour in the ranks when under the discipline of drill. It is when he is dismissed and permitted the

free exercise of his will that his true self is seen to emerge. The end and aim of all earthly probation is the training of men that they may be safely entrusted with power. God will never be satisfied until He can give man the freedom of the universe in the confident assurance that the freedom will not be abused. When He can thus turn us loose with absolutely no restrictions but those which the Christ-life within us will of itself beget, then both He and we shall know the rapture of reciprocal relations mutually and harmoniously fulfilled. Our sonship with God awaits its investment with plenary powers, till it has realized itself in such likeness to the divine that it becomes the sure and certain pledge of a loyalty that will never swerve, because it is made perfect in love.

A man's strength is everywhere the servant of his love. His ruling affection cuts the channels through which all his energies flow. This is why the Apostle John, with fine psychological insight, after reminding these young men of their splendid assets in the way of strength, hastens on to speak of their love. Instead of immediately directing them, as might have been expected, to the proper and most reproductive use of their strength, he appears hurriedly to drop its consideration and pass on to the seemingly irrelevant injunction as to the direction of their affections: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.' Instead, however, of irrelevance, there is deeply logical and psychological relation between the Apostle's estimate of their strength and his concern

as to the trend of their love, knowing, as he did, that all the forces of their being would follow its lead. Let a man's love go out to the highest, and all the energies of his life will bend their necks to its yoke and draw the chariot of his life towards the goals of his lofty desire. Conversely, if his love runs low and fixes on unworthy objects, then the very splendour of his gifts, the very brilliance of his powers, the very force of his nature, will only accelerate his descent to the deeps of doom.

No one of the Apostles was so qualified to speak on the subjugating power of a great affection as John. He was distinctly the Apostle of Love. He knew that if he could but turn the ruling love of those to whom he wrote from low to lofty objects, then he would, by so doing, be linking all their physical, mental, and moral powers with effects that would outlast the stars. The injunction, 'Love not the world' has to be construed through the context. There are four different senses in which the word 'world' is employed in the writings of John.

1. There is the physical creation. In the Saviour's intercessory prayer John reports his Master as saying, 'Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.' Now this cannot be the world which we are not to love. It is God's own handiwork, in which He Himself rejoices, and which He pronounced to be good. It is the manifestation of His mind, the expression of His thought. It is the 'older Testament' which men in every age have read. 'The heavens declare the

glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.'

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills, and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul ! the vision of Him who reigns !

The Apostle Paul shows us that ' the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divinity,' so that the whole pageant of nature is but the flowing and ever-changing robe of the Infinite—the veil which reveals, while it conceals, ' the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness,' so that to love God is to love the work of His hands.

2. The second use of the word ' world ' in John's writings means the earth in a local sense, as the dwelling-place of man. When the Saviour says, ' I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,' it is the world as trodden by His feet, the place of earthly residence, to which He refers. This could not be the world that the first disciples were not to love. How could they help loving a spot that had been consecrated by so many hallowed memories ? Olivet and Galilee, Bethany and Gethsemane, Jerusalem and Calvary would be for ever associated in their minds and hearts with Him whose personal presence had filled and flooded every spot where He had walked and talked with a sacredness too deep for words.

3. Then, again, there is a third use of the word, in which it indicates the world of universal humanity.

Just as we speak of the dwellers in a house as 'the house,' or the citizens of a city as 'the city,' so by transference of epithet, the dwellers in the world are called 'the world.' Listen to John iii. 16: 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This, therefore, cannot be the world we are not to love. Indeed, we are told by this very Apostle that if any man say he loves God and hate his brother, he is a liar.

4. But there is a fourth and sinister sense in which this word is used, and in which it indicates the world of thought and feeling that is antagonistic or indifferent to God and His claims. It is the world which we indicate by such phrases as 'The spirit of the age,' 'The temper of the times,' 'The fashion of the hour,' &c. It is that world of irresponsibility which recognizes no law but that of the latest vogue, and finds its all-sufficient sanction for every folly in the silly formula, 'They all do it,' which is the last resort of scatter-brain fools. The world we are not to love is this world of irresponsible thought and action, which resists and resents all interference with its licence in the fields of time. It is the spirit of Antichrist, of self-will and rebellion, and as such opposed to that spirit which seeks, by way of sacrifice, to unify all things in the one great brotherhood of obedience to the Highest and of service to the lowest and least.

The world-spirit makes its appeal to men through the medium of their senses. It is a subtle, pervasive,

and persuasive, because personal force, incarnating itself in a thousand seductive forms that beckon only to betray. This is the world that plays itself out on the stage of time and disappoints its votaries; for that which feeds the eye and gratifies the palate or stimulates the merely animal nature speedily palls upon the taste. The most delicious sources of physical delight tend to repel rather than attract, till the soul, disquieted within us, turns round on life itself with a challenge and questions its worth. The spirit of the age, as it stood expressed in the luxury and wantonness, the ostentation and self-indulgence of the Roman world at the time this letter was written, was so palpably at enmity with anything like true manhood that there was no necessity for the Apostle to elaborate 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.' He could have told them how the old Roman virtues had been displaced by vices that could not be named, how the old Roman strength was turned to rottenness and decay, and how the whole empire through its unlawful loves and corrosive vices was hurrying to its doom. But what was true for Rome is true for all time and for every land. Rome has gone, but her vices remain, and the Nemesis of retribution that followed on swift foot in the pathway of her sins is still abroad.

Whether in the case of nations or individuals, the ruling love is the determining factor of destiny. Where our love goes, there our strength goes. Where our strength goes, the work of our life is done. Where

the work of our life is done, our wages are earned, and we cannot sell our labour in one market and be paid for it in another. Every man's time-book is being kept, and God will render to each according to his deeds. 'To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil . . . for there is no respect of persons with God.'

The world-system against which we are warned in our text is described in the New Testament in terms which suggest a carefully-planned and intelligently-ordered opposition to the truth, a veritable kingdom of darkness as opposed to the kingdom of light. The word 'kingdom' as applied to the forces of evil was first used by Christ Himself in the famous question by which He floored the Pharisees: 'If Satan be divided against Satan, how then shall his kingdom stand?' From which it is clear that the powers of darkness are organized and administered with Satanic intelligence. It is a system of rule, or, if the term be preferred, of misrule, a settled policy of moral anarchy proceeding on inverted or perverted principles. It has its over-lord, who is called the 'Prince of Darkness' and the 'Prince of the Power of the Air'; while holding authority under him are what Paul calls 'The rulers of the darkness of this world.' Here, then, is this graduated and elaborated system of

contemptuous disregard for all claims but those which are dictated by the mode of the moment, the caprice of passion or the lust of gain. This is the world of unholy desire against which we are warned—the world that is under sentence of change and decay. In the words ‘The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever,’ we have two things placed in contrast. There is the capricious, unsatisfying, destructive, and dissipating desire of the world, and the constant, constructive, unifying, and abiding desire of the Eternal. These two have been opposed from the beginning. The forces of time and eternity, of selfwill and God’s will, meet in combat on the field of every human heart. The one is represented in the fleshly mind, which is enmity against God; the other in the spiritual mind, which is at enmity with the flesh. Paul has expressed it as the flesh lusting against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. The great-world conflict, with all its tragedy of broken hearts, blackened reputations, blasted hopes, and dishonoured graves, is simply the projection and multiplication on the stage of history of the little-world conflict which rages in every breast. The world without, in its loves and hates, its attractions and repulsions, its upward and downward pull, is merely the world within, written large.

The contrast between that which is of the world and that which is ‘of the Father’ is sharply drawn in two phrases, ‘Lust of the world,’ and ‘Will of

God.' Behind these words, 'Lust' and 'Will,' is the common thought of supreme desire. The word translated 'lust' represents the blind animal instincts that root themselves in the flesh—the elemental forces of undisciplined and unreasoning desire. The word translated 'Will' represents desire that is reasoned and purposeful—mental determination thoughtfully arrived at and intelligently pursued. The one boils up from the seething cauldron of the passions, the other takes its rise in the cold heights of reason. The one is the offspring of feeling, the other the product of thought. The one leaps and burns like uncontrollable flame; the other is calm, collected, cool. The one bursts from beneath, the other descends from above. This is the thought of the Apostle James in the fine contrast which he strikes out between what he distinguishes as the earthly and the heavenly wisdom, in the words, 'This wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.'

Here, then are the two worlds represented and the two wills. Into one or other of these worlds we must play the forces of our life—to one or other of these wills we must yield allegiance. There is no neutrality possible, neither can any combination-service be allowed. One of these wills organizes itself in the kingdom of man, the other in the kingdom of God—one in the world of flesh, the other in the world of Spirit: one is under sentence of change and decay;

the other is eternal, immutable, and victorious over death and the grave

We have seen that it could not be the material universe nor the great world of humanity as humanity, that John warned us from loving; but that it was that sinister spirit of insurrection, insubordination, moral treason, and antagonism to God—a spirit that resists and resents the imposition of authority and demands unbridled licence in the field of its desires. From the beginning of history these two have been candidates for the suffrage of the human will, and the Genesis story of the Fall corresponds, in its threefold representation of temptation, with the threefold classification in our passage, so that it would appear as if John had the Scripture narrative in mind as he wrote. Listen to the Genesis account: ‘When the woman saw that the tree was good for food’—that is the ‘lust of the flesh’—‘and that it was pleasant to the eyes’—that is the ‘lust of the eye’—‘and a tree to be desired to make one wise’—that is the ‘pride of life.’ By the serpent is symbolized the keenest and most subtle intellectualism as divorced from all moral consideration and restraint; and it is this spirit, clever as it is unscrupulous, that has succeeded in incarnating itself in the world. So that we have a dual incarnation in perpetual conflict—two clashing wills, as we have said, two opposing worlds—with one or other of which we must side, into one or other of which we must pour the strength of our life.

Now John was supremely anxious that those to

whom he wrote should be in the thing that was going to last. He credits them with strength ; but strength must find an outlet. It was never bestowed merely to be buckled back and held in restraint. The religion of Christ is not a thing of negatives and prohibitions. It is a positive life, for the full expression of which ample provision has been made in the will of God. There is absolutely no limit to the field ; God has use for every moment of a man's time and for every ounce of his force. To work with God's will is practical omnipotence ; for that will moves on unhasting and unresting through calm and storm, through peace and war, by dark and day—a changeless will that never fails nor flags, but persists through all the courses of the suns, through all lands of earth, through all the changes of history, to issue at last in the dethronement of evil, the casting down of the mighty from their seats, and the enthronement of the humble and meek. To be against this will is to be on the side of the disobedient, who shall be 'punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.'

There is a distinct implication in this passage that the will of God may be set at defiance and disobeyed. There would be no sense or justice in setting up a distinction between the destinies of men, if that distinction turned on their relation to a divine will that worked itself out inevitably in the sphere of human action and irrespective of human consent. It is clear, however, from a score of Bible incidents, that the

divine power in certain directions is not commensurate with the divine purpose. Again and again throughout the Scriptures in the history of nations and individuals the purpose of God is represented as held up, detained, and even thwarted, through the perversity of man. Thus the will that runs victoriously and unchallenged throughout the world of matter finds itself challenged in the world of mind. Nor can it have recourse to omnipotence in order to effect itself, because it relates to a region where omnipotence does not apply, and where, even if it were possible to call it in, it would not be permissible. The compulsion of a human soul would violate the fundamental condition of God's moral government, and degrade man to the level of a mere machine. God's will, therefore, in the world of mind must wait on man's free acceptance and consent. It is in this consent that all moral significance resides, and that all possibility in the way of character here and destiny hereafter is begotten.

In regard to the divine will, coalition and opposition are the only alternatives. We must be 'for' or 'against.' There is no neutrality possible. Even though we close our eyes and refuse to face the points at issue, we do not thus escape the onus of a formal determination. That which we do not accept even in common life we are held to reject. Suppose you offer me 100 shares to-day at £5 per share, and I do not accept; but to-morrow when they are £5 5s. I come round and ask delivery at to-day's quotation on the ground that I did not say 'No.' You will very

soon show me that not to have said 'Yes' meant 'No.' This is business as it is understood and transacted in the markets of the world; and according to Christ the same principle holds in the soul's transaction with God. So that, 'He that is not with Me is against Me' is a formula by which all would-be neutrals are swept into the opposition camp and numbered with His foes.

Now, doing the will of God must be understood in the broadest possible sense as covering the whole of life. It is a fatal mistake to imagine that will is concerned only with man's hereafter. God has a will for us here and now. It embraces what we call secular as well as sacred callings. He has placed us on this earth to search out its laws and to master its forces. We are to 'replenish the earth and subdue it'; and any anxiety about heaven which would dislocate us from duty on earth would defeat itself and bring about the very disaster it sought to avert. It would be as though a farmer became so absorbed in the thought of reaping that he forgot to sow. It is by concentrating on our duty here that we best prepare for the hereafter. Any religion that throws a man out of gear with the driving-wheels of time will thereby impoverish his eternity. It is no evidence of superior piety to discharge earthly duties and fulfil time relations in a deprecatory and apologetic fashion, as though earth and time were of the devil, and the sooner we were through with them the better. *The kingdom of God includes all that is true and noble and worthy in the

kingdom of man. Science, art, literature, medicine, law, statecraft, mining, engineering, manufacture, agriculture, trade and commerce are all the will of God for man as a citizen of earth. It is as much a religious duty to sustain all the multiplied industries that provide for this life as it is to fulfil the conditions that provide for another—indeed we best provide for another by doing our duty in this.

The will of God comprises not only every life, but all of every life. To regard it as having to do with moments of what we call worship, so that all the duties of the work-a-day world lie outside its rule, is totally to misconceive its range, to impoverish its meaning and narrow its control. We require to enrich and broaden our idea of worship so as to make it co-extensive with everything that is worthy. For 'worship' means literally 'worthship'—that is, devotion to everything that is worthy, whether in the home or the field, the office or the street. It is not the class of work that a man does which determines it to be religious or otherwise, but the class of motive that inspires it—the class of spirit in which it is done. The commonest task may be transfigured into a sublimely religious act through being performed in the spirit of love and self-sacrifice, while the most stately religious ceremonial may be desecrated into a grossly secular and even irreligious performance if the motive be selfish and the spirit mean. Everything depends on the doer as to the moral quality and classification of the deed. It follows, therefore, that to do the will of God does not

mean to perform so many so-called sacred duties, to offer so many prayers, to set apart so many hours for meditation, or to partition off such and such areas of life for special exercises. This is the pharisaic conception of religion, which unless we exceed we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. No; it is a simpler and yet profounder thing than any or all of these. It is to bring our whole life and lay it at God's feet, to be baptized into the spirit of self-sacrificing love, and then to go back and do just the same old things, it may be, as we did before, but in this newly-acquired spirit which we have gained at His feet. And oh! the wonder of it when the heart is filled with love! Even the lowliest task is made to glow with divine meanings; the most commonplace drudgery becomes suffused with a 'light that never was on sea or land,' because we are doing it all for His sake, who for our sake lived and loved and laboured, and suffered and died.

The will of God, then, is not something to be suffered merely, but something to be done. It is not passive endurance, but active, energetic service; not the holding back of power in restraint, but its full and free expression on constructive and creative work that is destined to endure. It is this element of endurance or abidingness that seems to appeal to John. He uses the word 'abide' some thirty times. Somehow it seized his imagination. Amid the flux and seeming fortuitousness of all earthly things he longed for the element of permanence. He cared only for the

things that would stay. He moved among scenes of rare and wondrous beauty, and that he had the artist's eye no one who reads the Apocalypse can doubt. But his eye wearied for sights more beautiful, his ear for harmonies more sweet, his heart for joys more deep and full than those of time. These were the enduring things he longed for, not only for himself, but for those to whom he wrote. It is this note of constancy which he struck that must appeal to men in every age. It is what the human heart sighs for, and the absence of which spoils the most exquisite sources of delight. 'The world passeth away'—this is literally as well as metaphorically true :

There rolls the deep where grew the tree ;
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.
The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands ;
They melt like mists, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

The will of God is the only thing that endures ; the system of His redeeming purpose abides from everlasting to everlasting, changeless amid all the changing years.

In concluding this study, let me press the positive side of Christianity as it is indicated by the phrase 'The Will of God,' and remind you how rich and varied are its activities, how spacious its fields. It represents possibilities of service which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man

conceived. It stands over against all our powers, and summons them to a field that will give them perpetual time and infinite range. There is absolutely nothing but the will of God that can make this provision, and so use up the whole individual. For us to find that will is to find our unifying centre where all our varied powers discover their satisfying and justifying ends. In the will of God man can let the whole of himself out. The admittance of that will into the life means the entry of the only Conductor who can command life's entire orchestra and evoke its maximum music. God's will, thus accepted and enthroned, leaves no single possibility of our nature without its opportunity of becoming actual. It supplies both the driving and directing power to life. It is not something outside of us, to which we have to conform as to some cold and impersonal standard. It is an ever-living, ever-loving, and personal force resident within us, fitting into all the folds of our wonderful nature, and bringing completeness and the sense of it into our souls. To abide in Him and have Him abide in us is eternal life. This will of God gathers itself up and finds utterance in His Word; but the final, fullest, and uttermost word becomes articulate in Him in whom all the Father's thoughts of love and grace, of beauty and truth, are lifted to the highest power of expression through being translated into terms of sacrifice. He is the true Logos—The Divine Word, to abide in whom is to pass from the local into the universal, from the temporal into the eternal, from the

mere semblance of life into the reality of the 'Life indeed.'

To be taken up into that system of the Divine will, through the full surrender of our own, is to be partakers of its permanence. This must be our own two-fold act of capitulation and appropriation—giving up our own will and assimilating His. Then we become wrought into the permanent structure of that spiritual temple to which patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, together with the true and noble of every country and of every age, have made contribution—that abiding structure of which Christ Himself, 'who is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,' is the chief corner-stone.

XVI

THINGS THAT REMAIN.—I

Whose voice then shook the earth ; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.—HEB. xii. 26, 27.

It is our fate or fortune to have had our lot cast in a keenly critical time. Ours is an age that takes nothing on trust. Its spirit can perhaps best be symbolized by an interrogation point. It queries everything. Nothing is too sacred for its investigation. The antiquity of no dogma is sufficient to secure for it immunity from trial. Creeds clothed with the sanction of great Councils and cloud-capped with the anathemas of Nice, Alexandria, or Rome, are cast into the crucible. Beliefs fondly cherished, and hoary with age, are brought to the test. Though the associations of centuries may have gathered round them, though they may have interwoven themselves with the very fibres of a people's life, they can find no sanctuary from the stern and uncompromising spirit of inquisition that is abroad. ' Prove all things ' is the watchword, ' Hold fast the genuine, reject the spurious in whatsoever form it masquerades.'

Now in such crucial times there will always be those who will tremble for the issue, timorous souls who dread the ordeal by fire. But amid the searching investigations to which the truths we hold are being subjected, there is only one temper of mind which can be regarded as truly candid and profoundly reverent ; and that is a mental attitude of frank and fearless welcome to every well-attested fact, from whatever quarter it may come, and whatever liquidation, reconstruction, or rejection of time-honoured opinions its acceptance may involve. Any other mood will be unworthy, because beneath an assumed faith it will veil a scepticism all the more ignoble because unavowed. To doubt is to discredit. To be apprehensive for those things we profess to believe is to confess fear where we had confessed faith, and thereby to forfeit confidence.

The collector of gems is not afraid of any legitimate test to which the lapidary may subject his treasures. Much as he would regret the disclosure that one of his alleged diamonds failed to survive the ordeal, yet even that disclosure, painful though it might be, would be infinitely preferable to the delusion, which time must ultimately dispel, of holding as genuine a worthless stone. For him to refuse the test for fear of the issue would be to discredit in advance the genuineness of his gems as effectively as if they had been proved to be false. In the same way, if we are afraid to submit the jewels of revealed truth to a searching investigation for fear they will not come scatheless out of its tor-

menting tests, then clearly they are not such as we can extract comfort from for ourselves, or commend with confidence to others. When some of us were boys, the tendency of our teachers was to check doubt by suppressing inquiry and appealing to the authority of great names. This, however, only resulted, as might have been foreseen, in exciting instead of allaying distrust, and in exposing to gratuitous discredit, through disingenuous methods of defence, truths which if left alone would have been found perfectly well able to take care of themselves. The age of mere authority has gone, and it is well. Authority may generate hypocrites; it cannot breed heroes. 'Acts of uniformity' may multiply sycophants; they cannot make saints. Truth has nothing to fear from the frankest and freest criticism, and they are her best friends who invite it on her behalf. Always, of course, assuming both the competency of the critic and the sincerity of his search.

It ought to be borne in mind that much of current doubt springs not so much from opposition to the truth as from regard for it; while, on the other hand, much of current belief is simply unthinking and credulous adherence to tenets that carry neither conviction to the mind nor comfort to the heart. It must not therefore be supposed that all reverence for truth and righteousness is on the side of those who affirm. If it were required to draw a line dividing the sincere from the insincere, the clean-living and high-thinking from those in whom 'the man is ever less and less and the

beast is more and more,' then that line would be found running, not as some good people would fain believe, *between* the camps of the so-called orthodox and heterodox, but *through* them. Many of the staunchest friends of truth, through their sheer honesty of purpose, have been confounded with her foes. They have sought to rescue her from the pathless wilderness of words in which she has been entangled ; and in cutting away the festoonery that has impeded and obscured her, they have been suspected of sinister designs upon the truth herself. Thus it comes to pass that almost any man who fearlessly faces the problems that are vexing the spirit of his time, and seeks to speak to men of the twentieth century in their own tongue wherein they were born, will lay himself open to suspicion as to his loyalty on the part of those who can recognize truth only when she is clothed in the verbal vestments of 300 years ago. Life, however, is too urgent, and its working day too brief, to fight for shadows ; and the Church that is to lead the march of living mind and the world of living men by re-incarnating the living Christ, must break loose from the tyranny of the imprisoning letter into the spacious freedom of that emancipating Spirit who searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The demand of the age, which some of the most cultured and saintly spirits of the time are seeking to meet, is for a re-statement of the foundation truths of Christianity in the terms of modern thought. Transitional periods, however, are always attended

with risk. In the case of life-forms in nature, which pass from one condition of being into another, say from a chrysalis to a butterfly state, nature jealously safeguards the passage; because during its course the creature is faced with the maximum of peril at the moment of its minimum power of self-defence. In order that everything essential to the new state of being shall be safely carried over, the life is hermetically sealed within the chrysalis, so that on its emergence into the winged condition nothing but the outworn garment is left behind.

Or, to view it in another aspect: words are simply the dwelling-places of ideas, and must not be confounded with their tenants. But ideas expand and multiply; and just as the four-roomed cottage of the newly-married couple has in course of time to give place to the more extensive villa as the family life unfolds, so in the world of thought there arises a necessity for new and more commodious accommodation in the way of terms in which to house the new and richer concepts we have gained.

Now, as many of my readers will know, it is in moving from house to house that the risk of loss and breakage is immeasurably increased. Let, then, the care with which at such a time you superintend the packing of your household treasures be to you a symbol of the scrupulous regard which should characterize every attempt to convey from one verbal residence to another the great and vital truths which are committed to your trust.

It is in these times of removal from one house to another that the opportunity occurs for effecting separations between things that are of permanent value and those that have outgrown their utility. Just as there is a burning of accumulated material that served a temporary purpose, but which you would not dream of carrying into a new place of residence, so in the vacation by truth of ancient forms of expression, there will result a leaving behind and destruction of much that was of merely local and transient service, so that only what is of essential and permanent worth may be retained.

Moreover, the distinction that we inevitably and instinctively draw between a home and a mere homestead presents us with a true and very beautiful analogy of the vital distinction which exists between truth itself and the mere tenement of words in which it provisionally resides. The abiding character of the home life as compared with the terminable tenure of a house is finely symbolical of the abiding nature of truth, though the verbal house of her tabernacle may dissolve.

But some cynic may retort that there are tragic instances on record in which the house has outlasted the home, and in which the unhappy occupants have kept up a hollow mockery of mutual confidence and respect long after the fires of affection have burnt out, and where what were once vital and vitalizing bonds of love have now become corrosive chains. To which I would reply that here too, alas ! does our analogy hold good ; for the forms of faith are all too frequently

held and its ordinances observed long after they have ceased to stand for realities of thought and feeling, or to throb with spiritual life.

Just, however, as the spiritual ideal of the home survives from generation to generation, though houses may be demolished, and not one stone be left upon another ; just as the domestic sanctities persist and prevail, in spite of those who profane them ; so the great truths of our holy religion surmount and survive all the disintegrating forces of time and change. They belong to the eternities out of which they have come. Their appearance under time and space conditions, their embodiment from century to century in persons and deeds, in laws and institutions, in customs, traditions, and formulated beliefs, became necessary in order that they might flash their mystic meaning into mind and heart. With the spiritual development of the race from age to age, these methods of embodiment change from form to form, passing by clearly traceable gradations from lower and more rudimentary expressions to such as are higher and more refined.

The history of this developmental process would lead us to expect that these successive and progressive reappearances of eternal verities will proceed in ever subtler forms as we ascend in the scale of life, and our spiritual susceptibilities become correspondingly acute. In order to our spiritual culture these truths are for ever withdrawing themselves more and more from the world of sense into the realm

of spirit, retreating from the field of time to the bosom of the eternities, where, after having served the generations of men by the will of God, they will await and greet us at our coming, and in forms which, though transcendent, we shall recognize as investing familiar friends. For of truths, even as of persons, may we not say, adapting Tennyson's fine lines :

Eternal form shall still divide
Eternal truths from all beside,
And we shall know them when we meet !

Now, it is this vital quality of truth which necessitates its ever-changing forms. All life with which we are acquainted takes on form, builds up structure. We know nothing of life apart from its manifestations. We can observe and study it only through its phenomena. These phenomena are common to it in all its grades. There are at least five leading characteristics of life: Assimilation, Alteration, Organization, Motion and Reproduction. It would be exceedingly interesting to test the spiritual life of the Church by each of these different qualities in turn, and thus to ascertain how far it would be found in the possession and exercise of the functions they severally represent. The adequate treatment of such a theme, however, would of itself require the dimensions of a treatise, so that in spite of its fascination and all the wealth of analogy it enfolds, let us for the present narrow our study to the second of these characteristics which our text suggests, *viz.*, Alteration, or that quality in life by which it effects and at the same time survives

periodic changes in form, dropping its mantle in its upward way. In the life-history of every organism there is this shedding of outgrown and discarded apparel. The triumphal procession of animal and vegetable life, with all its wondrous laws, its marvellous adaptations, its gracious utilities, and its innumerable patterns of rich and rare design, moves along a highway strewn with the garments of outgrown types. Thus through many a perished symbol and semblance of life, does the 'life indeed' hold on its victorious way.

Macaulay has said, 'A great writer is the friend and benefactor of his readers,' and I hereby desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to the writer who under God, has above all others distinguished for me the abiding truth from its merely temporary expression, presenting me with a principle of interpretation which conducts its possessor behind the veil of merely transient terms into the 'Real Presence' of the Eternal thought.

Now, the only way in which such a debt to the past can be discharged is by endowing the present, and making it partaker in one's gains. The person to whom I owe so much is the Great Unknown from whose heart and brain the Epistle to the Hebrews has come down to us as an anonymous but unspeakable gift.

May I without presumption, and led by this inspired but nameless guide, be permitted to take my reader by the hand and thus make him sharer in the viewpoint I have gained?

The author of this luminous letter was gifted with that rare faculty of discrimination that could distin-

guish with unfailing accuracy between the accidental and the essential, the transient and the abiding, the merely local and the universal, in the historic development of divine revelation from age to age. Whoever he may have been, he knew his Bible well. There are but two chapters out of the thirteen that are not lit up with liberal quotations from either Old Testament history, prophecy, or psalm. Even these, the ninth and the eleventh, disclose such familiarity with the ancient Scriptures as to suggest that they must have been either at the author's elbow as he wrote, or else have been so wrought into the very fibre of his brain that he could neither think nor write excepting in their terms. Think whether in the wide field of Biblical interpretation with which you are familiar, you ever met anything so daring as this writer's startling comment on the Old Testament scripture which constitutes our text :

‘ Whose voice then shook the earth : but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heavens. *And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*’

This passage consists in part of a quotation from the Prophet Haggai, and in part of our author's amazing interpretation. Who but he would ever have dreamt that the words ‘ Yet once more ’ held such wondrous implications as he thus makes explicit ? With

unrivalled insight he pierces to the heart of this ancient prophecy, and lays bare the eternal principle it enfolds. I confess to standing with reverent and admiring wonder before the mind that again and again throughout this marvellous letter could thus push its way behind and beneath the passing show of men and things, of laws and ordinances, of institutions and traditions, and lay hold of the everlasting principles which their coming and going disclosed—a mind that

Searched through all it felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reached the law within the law.

This, then, would appear to have been the special gift of our author ; a gift valuable at any time, but specially so at the time in which he wrote, when the old order was changing, giving place to new ; a time of transition, when the pious Hebrew was watching with wistful eyes the vanishing of the stately ritual and the gorgeous ceremonial of the ancient temple-services, around which the tender memories and associations of twenty centuries reverently clung. His aim is to show his readers that all of these, having had their day, must cease to be ; that all their mystic rites and ceremonies found their interpretation and realization in Him who fulfilled them, as the oak fulfils the promise of the acorn, by expanding and crowning with fullness of glory its latent and inherent life. This is the satisfying end to which the whole epistle moves. In the very first chapter the writer strikes the keynote to which his message has been

set. Over against the vanishing splendours of earth and time, as well as against the vaster, yet equally vanishing glories of the stars, is placed the majestic repose of the Eternal, the changeless years of the Most High. Listen as he quotes from the 102nd Psalm, and say where in the whole range of literature, sacred or profane, is there anything more exquisite in its music or more stately in the measure of its march :

‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest. And they shall all wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.’

This becomes really the text from which he develops a startling study in contrasts between the transient and the abiding, the shadow and the substance, the type and the anti-type, the near and the remote, the visible and the invisible, the temporal and the eternal. These are the pairs of opposites that are for ever confronting each other from the first chapter to the last, in which, taking farewell of his readers, he strikes out his final contrast between the perishable structures of time and the imperishable mansions of the skies, as he exclaims, ‘Here have we no continuing city, but seek one to come.’ This then is the task to which our author has addressed himself—to find the permanent in the passing, to discover the abiding elements underlying the flowing and ever-changing

robe of appearances, to break through the frozen crusts of creeds, custom, and convention, in order to disclose to view the ever-running waters of truth which they conceal.

This power of penetrating to the eternal thought which everywhere underspreads the surface of its merely temporal expression marks this writer out as a finely-gifted soul, the flash of whose insight was sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of body and soul, of word and thought, of creed and truth, of shell and pearl, of organism and life.

In the great passage which we have quoted, the writer refers his readers to the circumstances under which the law was given to Moses at Sinai. The scene, familiar to every instructed Hebrew, which thus served him as an illustration of the principle for which he was contending, combined in a very striking fashion the contrasted elements of flux and fixedness. Let us for one moment reconstruct it. Here is the wilderness, with its vast solitudes, its billowy wastes, that weary the eye with their interminable sameness. For forty days have the Children of Israel been journeying since their deliverance. This horde of erstwhile slaves, with the marks of their bondage still fresh upon them and the taunt of the taskmaster still ringing in their ears, were an unorganized and undisciplined crowd. Their newly-acquired freedom exposed them to perils as great as, if not greater than, those from which they had been rescued. There is

always this risk attending the sudden investment of people with power, whether in the case of individuals or of nations. It thus became important above everything else that as soon as might be they should be placed under law. They were a crowd of querulous, discontented, spiritless people, with absolutely no initiative or resource, as timid as the very rabbits whom their coming had scared. The four hundred years of servitude had done its work. Their manhood was flickering to a finish, like a dying flame. Their very desire for freedom was well-nigh dead. Cowed and dismayed by the slightest discouragement, they were ready to hark back to bondage. Rather than face the risks of freedom, they preferred to live and die as slaves.

This then was the raw material—or rather, spoilt material—which had to be wrought up through pain and discipline into a nation whose subsequent history was to be inseparable from the progress of humanity and the destinies of the race.

And now these men, who had toiled amid the shifting, drifting sand-dunes of the desert, which were never two days alike, were brought face to face, for the first time, with the mountains—those rocky emblems of changeless and indeterminate duration. Lonelier even than the lonely wilderness from which they so abruptly rose, and as though seeking a still more secure and inviolable seclusion, the splintered peaks of Horeb and Sinai thrust themselves into the quiet sky.

Now, it would be next to impossible for this people to escape the impression of stability and everlastingness which these mountains would convey. From immemorial time mountains have been employed as the emblems of constancy. Psalmist and seer alike have pressed them into service and made them to stand as symbols of all that was solid, substantial, enduring. Clearly, then, to make these stubborn and solid monuments of endurance tremble from their base, as Sinai trembled at the presence of the Lord, was to break down the last earthly security in which men could trust. To make the everlasting hills appear as precarious as a house of cards was to strike a blow at all human confidence in the steadfastness of the material order. When the rock-ribbed mountains shudder, when their majestic peaks are shaken like a cornsheaf in the wind, what is there left in which to trust? If these granite fastnesses fail which have stood for generations unnumbered, then whither shall men flee?

Thus, then, amid the most solemn and impressive reminders of material instability, was the moral law proclaimed. The everlasting righteousness of God, which stood enthroned 'before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world were made,' was set over against the passing and perishing earth. We owe to the fine insight of this writer the knowledge that this was the true inwardness of the Sinaitic phenomena. It is the permanence of the moral order as contrasted with the evanescence of the

material order. It is difficult to conceive a more striking and effective method of impressing the mind with the mutability of the material system than that of thus rocking the mountain monarchs in their seats.

Here, then, is the universal principle for which this writer contends—the material must pass, but the moral abides. The one can be shaken, the other is impregnable and cannot be moved. Unchanging in the midst of change, the moral order holds on its undeviating way. Forms perish, creeds pass, customs change, systems come and go, kingdoms rise and fall, one generation passeth away and another cometh; but truth and righteousness keep their ancient seats unmoved. Justice holds on with unresting step, with unsleeping eye, with unerring hand, because high over all the vicissitudes of time and the shifting attitudes of human thought dwells the purpose that never falters and the Love that for ever endures. It is this permanence of the moral order through all the courses of the suns and through all the changes of history that seems to have seized the imagination of this man and dominated his thought. He sees this great law giving unity and progressiveness to divine revelation. He discloses it running like a golden thread through all the centuries, giving value to the sacrifice of the Priest, meaning to the message of the Prophet, and sanction to the rule of the King, till all these lofty lines at length converge, and find their unity in that Supreme Personality, who as Prophet, Priest, and King is ‘the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.’

XVII

THINGS THAT REMAIN.—II.

THE exordium to this letter sets forth in stately language the permanent and progressive principle in divine revelation at work from the grey dawn of revealed truth, and on through morning mists, till it reached its meridian might, and men beheld 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

Now, it is one thing to perceive and register the distinction between things that pass and things that remain: it is quite another to interpret the reason for the transient, and find the moral purpose it enfolds. This writer affirms not merely the movableness of things that are made, but why they move, *viz.*, that the immovable may stand revealed. 'He taketh away the first that He may establish the second,' the reason being our tendency to confound and confuse them. We all desire the permanent, but are easily tricked by the transient. When we were children we thought that the scudding clouds that drifted across the face of the moon were stationary, and that it was the moon that was rushing through. Now we know that the clouds are but flying phantoms, and that, in relation to them at least, the moon abides. But we are still

the victims of illusion. We are deceived by appearances. They wield a sort of sorcerer's charm over us. But this teaching comes to break the spell of those enchantments under which we grasp the shadow and let the substance slip. In doing so, however, it shows that the shadow has its uses. The transient plays itself out in the field of phenomena, that in passing it may say : ' There cometh one after me that is mightier than I.'

That men mistake the temporal for the abiding is no more the fault of the material order than it was the fault of John the Baptist that men mistook him for the Christ. He always disavowed Messiahship. ' He confessed and denied not, but confessed saying, " I am not the Christ ! " ' And so with the visible pageant of creation and the great march-past of forms that come and go. These by their very evanescence are for ever confessing that they are but witnesses to the ceaseless and changeless energy which everywhere throbs beneath the surface of the seen. Here, then, is the teaching we need. The transitory is the forerunner of the permanent. Its business is to prepare the way for the permanent into the heart and mind of man.

In order that the eternal distinction between the accidental and the essential shall be clearly seen and strongly held, the accidental is continually falling away. It is in perpetual flux. But the reappearance of the same or similar types year after year, century after century, declares the existence and persistence of an underlying, undying permanence, whose invisible

hands are for ever moulding into shape and touching into beauty the forms of things that do appear. The forms pass, but the plastic force remains, and if we had but ears to hear them in their passage, we should catch the witness that they bear to the Eternal whose ministers they are. Had we but eyes to perceive, we should detect the 'hands that reach through Nature moulding men,' and all the things we touch and see.

These visible manifestations of the material order are sacramental in their office. Through them we come to our cognitions of the invisible order, which they struggle to express. They must perish and pass, but it abides.

That this permanent and spiritual order may enter into our souls, incorporating itself with ourselves, and becoming part of our own mental and moral structure, we are set within the circle of ceaseless change. In a word, that mind and soul may come under the 'powers of the world to come,' they are temporarily subjected to the powers of the world that is to go. Is not this what Paul meant when he wrote : 'The creation was subjected to vanity (that is, to instability), not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it in hope, that the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of the vanishing (that is, the law of change and decay) into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God' ? That is to say, they are delivered from the tyranny of the transient order and invested with the freedom of the permanent City of God.

The coming and going of the visible order provokes the inquiry as to whence, and whither, and why. We watch the emergence of life-forms from behind the veil. We witness their growth, their development, their decay, and follow with a curious mind their disappearance behind the veil again. Over all the process of their coming and passing there broods the insoluble mystery that challenges thought, quickens imagination, and touches the soul with wondering awe. He must have either a head of wood or a heart of stone who can witness this perpetual flux unmoved, asking no reason why, nor making any mental or moral deductions from the passing show.

To the man who wrote this letter, as to all who have trained the inner ear, the witness of things that can be shaken is clear and strong, and this is what they say : ' That from which we have come and into which we haste, is the fixed, the static, the Eternal. We appear and vanish, that mistrusting us, you may throw yourselves upon that which abides. We would weaken your faith in the temporal that you may hide yourself in the Eternal, who is, and who was, and who is to come.'

This conviction of the Eternal underneath the shifting, drifting sands of the temporal, tends more than anything else to allay the fret and fever of life. It gives calmness and repose to the spirit amid all the distractions of earth and time. Rightly to relate ourselves to this eternal order by a living faith, is to receive into our hearts a kingdom that cannot be

shaken. It is to step out of the category of the perishable and to become heirs of the imperishable. It is to become children of the 'house not made with hands,' and citizens of that capital 'which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Once we grasp the truth that the hand that shakes is the hand that makes, our anxiety is straightway allayed. Gaining consciousness of the Eternal, we become content to part with the temporal. We leave it behind. It has served its purpose and may pass. We can witness unconcerned the principle of disintegration at work upon long-cherished forms, when once we are assured that it is merely liberating the spirit of life, and providing ampler scope for its free and unhindered play. All the disquietude of the Church in view of modern critical methods is due to failure in distinguishing between merely temporal terms of expression and the permanent thought for which they stand.

In our treatment of the book which we call the 'Word of God,' how many of us have learnt wisely to discriminate between the mere word and the underlying thought with which it beats and burns? For the most part men have been so dominated by the letter and text as to miss the spiritual meanings with which they have been charged. They build the house of their faith upon the sand of verbal forms, with the inevitable result that when these are swept away they imagine all is lost. Whereas had they pushed beneath the mere forms of life and laid the corner-stones of their religious system on personal experience of

divine life in their own souls, they would have been placed in possession of a peace that nothing could disturb. What is needed is to reach a point of view where men can see that anything that can be corroded with the acid of criticism is thereby proved to be but transient and of but temporary value and concern ; that if it be movable, then clearly it does not belong to the order of things about which we need have a care.

In point of fact, nothing really matters that does not belong to the immovable order. Nothing is of consequence that can be touched by the tooth of time. This is the principle for which the author of this Epistle is contending. The case of the Hebrews, for whose comfort and instruction this letter was written, afforded him a fine opportunity for stating and illustrating his position. Already the siege of Jerusalem was impending, and presently its walls would be girdled by the legions of Rome. The temple, with all its sumptuous appointments, its stately ritual, its elaborate ceremonial, its chanted liturgy, its solemn sacrifices, its white-robed priests, its brazen altars, its swinging censers, and its vessels of gold, with all the brooding mystery suggested by the separating veil, was about to pass away for ever. Though for centuries these had been associated in the Jewish mind with the worship of the Father, the time had at length arrived for this association to be dissolved. In the process of that dissolution much that they had cherished would be flung aside as worthless. Violence would be done

to their most sacred sentiments, and they would require to recall the Saviour's assurance, as He launched the new faith on its victorious career : ' I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'

The earlier stages of fulfilment may appear to the uninitiated so uncommonly like destruction as to be easily mistaken for it. A child seeing an acorn swelling and bursting into germination might easily imagine its rotting capsule to be a sign of destruction and decay. The acorn itself, if it could for a while be endowed with sentient life, might expostulate that the winter rains and the spring sun, the chemical salts of the earth, and all the action of heat and moisture were working its ruin. Could the elements speak, however, their answer to any such charge would be : ' We are not come to destroy, but to fulfil. We are only loosening the bonds of your mysterious life, that we may give it full and unimpeded play.'

Judaism was the acorn of which Christianity is the oak. But in the dying of the one into the other there were wrappings and outward ceremonies which had to perish, in order that the inherent life might find expression in richer and more manifold forms. From the confusion of form with spirit the Church at all cost must be delivered. For those who insist on identifying the verbal mould into which the inspired thought has been run with the indwelling and informing Spirit, there is a future of great distress, because many verbal expressions will have to go. Nothing can save them. They are among the things that can be shaken—that perish

with the using and pass. The conservatism that in the name of orthodoxy would retain a cold, rigid, and fossilized form, in preference to a warm, free, and flexible life, is no friend to truth, and is itself already doomed to death.

The eternal truth is quite independent of its accidental and temporary expression. Nothing can hurt it ; no weapon that is formed against it can prosper. Words change and pass, but that for which they stand will abide 'when all that seems shall suffer shock.'

A word is the crystallization of an idea ; but before it can become effective as a vehicle of thought it has to be dissolved by its recipient into its original spirit. Truth is spiritual. It must therefore find a word or its equivalent symbol in which to become incarnate before it can pass from mind to mind. But, just as it is spiritually conceived by the mind that gives, so it must be spiritually received by the mind that takes. Else the word that embodied it will simply become the grave of a buried idea. Biblical criticism has helped to burst many a long-sealed sepulchre. It has opened the prison-house to thoughts that were bound, loosing them and letting them go. At the risk of being misunderstood, every age has to do this work afresh. Truth requires again and again to be liberated from the fetters that would hamper her movement, the incrustations that form upon her surface, the parasites that feed upon her life. Let us, however, get it fixed for ever in our minds that Truth herself is invulner-

able. All that the shocks of time and the assaults of criticism can do is to disturb the temporary forms within which she lives and moves. Of these she must be periodically divested, lest they restrict her freedom and impede her march. Not that she would be unclothed, but clothed afresh, for whatever methods of thought-transmission the future may hold for us, for the present, at any rate, we are dependent on language.

But words have a way of becoming concealing instead of revealing media. It is the peril of all symbols that, after repeated use, they cease to stand for realities of thought and feeling. It is a strange paradox that the necessary means of advancement, if too long retained, become its fatal bar. The guards of a tree, for example, which may serve a useful purpose during its earlier growth, must, when it has reached a point at which they hamper and restrict its further development, be removed. So the human mind reaches points of attainment at which certain stays and supports become, even if not repressive, yet superfluous. Scaffolding, which is necessary during the progress of a cathedral, becomes, when the structure is completed, not only unnecessary, but detrimental. It hides the graceful lines and fair proportions of the edifice, it prevents its beauty from being perceived and admired, and it is taken away that the permanent may be revealed. It was but preparatory and provisional, and now, having served its end, it must cease to be. This was the lesson which these Hebrew

Christians required to learn. All the ritual and ceremonial of the ancient temple service was but the scaffolding behind which was being reared the spiritual concept which realized itself in Jesus Christ. Once He appeared, it might disappear. Indeed, it had to do so, lest it should obscure the lineaments of that majestic Personality in whom all the elements of strength and beauty meet. All that the most searching criticism has succeeded in doing has been to thrust His unique character into yet grander relief. It has stripped off many of the mythical fancies which a pious imagination had woven around Him. But He remains as never before, to challenge the world's thought, to command its homage, to evoke its love.

The temple has gone, the priest has gone, the sacrifice has gone, because He has come, who is Temple and Priest and Sacrifice in one. When destructive criticism has done its worst and finished its work, it will leave us richer than it found us—richer in the possession of all those elements which are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In other words, it will leave us Christ, and possessing Him, we can part with everything beside. Is not this the central lesson of the Transfiguration scene? It is written that the disciples who accompanied Jesus 'beheld Moses and Elijah talking with Christ.' Peter suggests the building of tabernacles that the heavenly visitants may abide. But they may not abide, because they do not represent the permanent order, but the transient. Once God spoke through them; but now will He speak through

His Son. This is the meaning of the message from the over-hanging cloud, which may be thus expanded: 'Hitherto ye have listened to Moses and the prophets—these were merely My beloved servants; but this is my beloved Son, henceforth hear ye Him!' And so the law and the prophets pass, and when again the disciples look 'they see no man but Jesus only.'

For those who have eyes to see there is another Transfiguration at hand. To-day we behold the Lord through the medium of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, and Paul. But these are not intended to abide. With a wisdom that comes after the event, we will not suggest the building of tabernacles. To our seeking souls, guided by the gracious witness of the Gospels into the presence of the Risen Lord, there is granted a revelation private, personal, and immediate, which infinitely transcends in preciousness anything that can be conveyed through the medium of any merely secondary ministry, however divinely inspired. For us, in that supreme moment of manifestation, even the glorious company of the Apostles must pass from sight, and their written records appear but the perishing framework of the imperishable Christ. He alone abides, and as we bow in worship at the feet of the Transfigured Saviour, we too can hear the Father speaking from the bending sky. Then as we venture to lift our wondering eyes, we too shall find that Matthew has gone, Mark, Luke, John, James, Peter, Paul—all have gone, till verily

we see no man, but Jesus only, and we are alone with our Lord.

In his *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West* Bishop B. F. Westcott affirms : ' Christianity is absolute : it is also historical. It is historical, not simply in the sense in which (for example) Mohammedanism is historical, because the facts connected with the origin and growth of this religion, with the personality and life of the Founder, with the experience and growth of His doctrine, can be traced in documents which are adequate to assure belief ; but in a far different sense also. It is historical in its antecedents, in its realization, in itself ; it is historical as crowning a long period of religious training, which was accomplished under the influence of divine facts ; it is historical as brought out in all its fullness from age to age in an outward society by the action of the Spirit of God ; but above all, and most characteristically, it is historical, because the revelation which it brings is of life and in life. The history of Christ is the Gospel in its light and in its power. His teaching is Himself, and nothing apart from Himself ; what He is and what He does.'

Thus while it is true that we must hold fast with an iron strength to the historical facts of Christianity, yet the supreme necessity is to come to a face-to-face and first-hand knowledge of the Creative Personality that made the facts, and who is still the vital and vitalizing force in history. Only as we thus become the field of His redeeming energy can we make our

proper contribution to the perpetuation of His resurrection life by becoming its credible witnesses. The Apostles were unanimous in ascribing their success to the indwelling power of the risen Christ. The essential qualification for apostolic work was that they should be 'witnesses of the resurrection.' The witness here spoken of is not the mere witness to a great objective fact belonging to a dead past, but to a great subjective experience in the living present. Christ had not only appeared to them outwardly as 'alive after His passion.' He had become alive for evermore in their consciousness, so that every one of them could have said with Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Now, it is because this may be a perpetual experience, that the Church is qualified to be a perpetual witness to the resurrection. This is an infinitely grander thing than to have seen and handled the risen Lord. She witnesses to a living experience of the ever-living Christ. The Church, even in its darkest days, has always been able to show the miracle of pure and saintly lives walking with unstained garments amid all the corruptions of a corrupt age, with the light of a great purpose shining in their eyes and the fire of a great love burning in their hearts. It is this miracle, I say, and this alone, that will convince men that Christ still lives; that, though invisible, He has not withdrawn Himself from the Church He founded with His blood, but that He is still living on and working on in the lives of those who love Him and who name His name.

The power of the Church's witness rests now, as then, in the dynamic of redeemed and inspired personalities. We cannot visit the Saviour's empty tomb ; and if we could, it would prove nothing in our day, any more than the empty tombs of the kings of Judah prove their resurrection from the dead. The mightiest apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a Christ-like life, and it is by this perpetually recurring miracle that the Church, even in the darkest periods of her history, has witnessed to the resurrection of her Lord.

The whole-hearted acceptance of this principle will free us from the fetters of tradition and deliver us from the dead hand of the past. It is astonishing how certain forms and ceremonies, certain institutions and customs, linger on long after they have ceased to possess any mental or moral significance. We accept them without question ; we perpetuate them without intelligence. Once they stood for living realities of thought and feeling, and throbbed with meanings for mind and heart. To-day they are lifeless forms through which the spirit breathes no more. This is the peril of all ordinances, lest in their use we should never penetrate to their true inwardness. Had we but the wit to understand, or even the honesty to inquire, we should either drop them as obsolete, or, what is better still, re-charge them with their original contents and make them stand once more for the realities they were created to express. In surrounding the Table of the Lord, it is not merely the outward acceptance of the visible emblems, but the inward

appropriation of the realities for which they stand, that alone can preserve this ordinance from degenerating into a merely superstitious rite or empty show.

Infinitely preferable would it be not to employ a symbol at all unless its true inwardness is in some measure seized. Under such conditions it becomes a concealing rather than a revealing medium of spiritual truth and blessing—a hindering rather than a helpful ordinance. Faith, in such a case, instead of reaching its true objective, becomes side-tracked. It gets entrapped in the symbol and exhausted of force, instead of leaping by means of the symbol to the Personal Christ, its living end and aim. These visible and tangible elements are intended to assist the mind. When rightly used they help to fix and focus the attention. They converge the lines of thought, not for the purpose of detaining them, but, like a lens, to transmit them to the object of all thought and desire. Here, however, lies the peril, lest instead of transmitting they should detain. It is a peril inseparable from their use, and the risk is greatest to those who need them most. Whatever view we may take of the Quaker attitude towards the sacraments, and however much we may concede to those who have outgrown the need of forms and symbols, it must be allowed that for the general they are still required. It is true that the deeply spiritual nature, highly cultured in the things of God, may be able to dispense with outward forms and ordinances which, as Paul says, ‘perish with the using,’ but it has to be remembered that there is

always a new generation coming on behind, for whom these are still necessary, for whom we are morally bound to preserve them unimpaired, and to whom we must pass them on in all their primitive purity and simplicity. Our Lord's example in the matter of baptism affords a striking illustration of the principle that, even for those who may have outgrown the need of an ordinance for their own sake, yet for the sake of others its observance should still be retained. But the sum of all this is that the visible must conduct to the invisible, or it will become a snare.

It is the holding on to the empty shell of things after the things themselves have become inanimate against which we must guard, or our religion will become a thing of mere mechanics, and honourable men will turn from it in disgust to seek communion with the unorganized and elemental life.

We are in danger of confounding what Christ called His Church with the elaborated system of ecclesiastical machinery with which custom has made us familiar. We forget that we may have all of this and no spirituality whatever, and that conversely religion may be present in all its life-giving power in the absence of it all. This is the supreme test of permanence—that which is separable from life without impairing its value as a working and reproducing force belongs to the transitory. It can be shaken, nay, it must and will be shaken, in order that the life may find freer and more unfettered flow. Spiritual life may be safely trusted to effect its own escape from the imprison-

ing forms which impede its movement. It will not long remain in the organism in which it cannot come to full expression and display its manifold powers. In other words, the Holy Spirit will withdraw Himself from the Church in which He has not complete control, or through which He cannot freely express the mind and heart of God. God is the great Conserver of energy. He permits no waste. He has no time nor use for Churches through which He cannot come into saving touch with the world He seeks to redeem. The Churches are only temporary and provisional institutions, and unless He can realize Himself in and through them, they must give place to something else through which He can. The Kingdom of God in this regard, as in many others, is like unto the kingdom of man. The engine that will not do the work for which it has been designed is superseded by one that will.

When I was in England in 1907 there were twenty newly-imported locomotives thrown on the scrap-heap, which through unreliability had to be put out of service. This meant a straight-out loss of from £80,000 to £100,000 to the company; but safety and security had to be purchased at any cost. Whether or not a great deal of our highly-organized ecclesiastical machinery is qualifying for God Almighty's scrap-heap is a question that might well exercise the minds of Christian people. It is true that the Church is a permanent institution; but that is the spiritual entity, and must not be confounded with the visible organization with its rites and ceremonies, still less

with the various sects and denominations that go by that name. These must all perish and pass.

Any one who regards our present unhappy divisions into competing camps and rival interests as possessing the element of permanence, or as expressing the Church's final form, must have read his Bible and his history to very little purpose. These are all merely scaffolding, more or less clumsy and ineffective, behind which, untouched by human hands, and unperceived by human eyes, there grows up a living temple, wondrous fair, which is the true and only Church, because it is spiritual and independent of time and place, embracing all ages and peoples in one great spiritual confederation and confraternity of souls.

Only as the visible Church contributes to the invisible does she prove her claim to continuance. Once she becomes an end in herself she enters on decline. In any case the various denominations of Christendom have but a temporary value. They emerge to meet a need which has been created either by defection from within or exigency from without. When they have made their contribution they remerge into the general life, it may be to appear again in another form, for

The old order changeth, giving place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

But that the Church will yet put off her perishing vesture, and finally emerge in new and beauteous form as a bride adorned for her husband, is our sure

and certain hope. This daring hope in the face of perishing systems and passing forms comes only to those whose faith can pierce the veil of the visible and lay hold of the invisible, those who are willing to part with the semblance of life that they may hold to the life indeed, those who can say with Schiller : ' A God is. A Holy Will lives, however the human heart may stagger. High over all the weavings of time and change lives the sublime Purpose, and though all creatures groan in a circle of change, yet unchanging in the midst of change there is one quiet Spirit.'

In this faith we take with us words, and turning to Him who has been the dwelling-place of the Church in all generations, we would cry :

O Living Will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto Him who hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To One that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

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